

Brent A. Strawn

What Is Stronger than a Lion?

Leonine Image and Metaphor
in the Hebrew Bible and the
Ancient Near East



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To Holly
(of course)

...שבע שנים ויהיו בעיניו כימים אחדים באהבתו אתה (Gen 29:20)

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Preface

The present monograph is a revised version of a doctoral dissertation originally submitted to the faculty of Biblical Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary (2001). The original work was written while I was on faculty at Asbury Theological Seminary and the revisions were undertaken in my present appointment at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University. While the main lines of the argument and the general substance of the earlier work remain in place here, the whole project has been thoroughly reconsidered. Major changes are found in Chapter 5, in the inclusion of Appendices 2-3, and by the addition of several new figures and maps. I have also taken the opportunity to update the footnotes and bibliography throughout, though three important volumes came to my attention too late to be incorporated systematically. They are: Billie Jean Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (HdO 64; Leiden: Brill, 2002); Peter Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere: Studien zum Verhältnis von Mensch und Tier im alten Israel* (OBO 187; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 2002); and Chikako Esther Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia: A Contextual Approach* (WOO 1; Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik, 2002). The last book was still unavailable to me as this volume went to press but I have had the opportunity to cite the first two at several points.¹

I am indebted to the many persons and institutions that have played important roles in this project, both in its original inception and, now, in its current formulation. It is certainly one of the most pleasurable duties of an author to catalogue such debts. First, I am grateful for my years at Princeton Theological Seminary and to the members of my dissertation committee: Patrick D. Miller (chair), J. J. M. Roberts, and C. L. Seow. Additionally, Othmar Keel served as an outside reader of the dissertation. Without his pioneering work and his kind provision of several key volumes in *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*, the present book could not have been written. Also at

¹ I would also draw the reader's attention to the four dissertations that Irene Winter has mentioned, each of which deals with some aspect of Ashurbanipal's lion hunts (see Chapter 4, §4.3.1.2 of the present work). See Irene J. Winter, "Le Palais imaginaire: Scale and Meaning in the Iconography of Neo-Assyrian Cylinder Seals," in *Images as Media: Sources for the Cultural History of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (1st Millennium BCE)* (ed. Christoph Uehlinger; OBO 175; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 2000), 55 n. 2. To my knowledge, the only one of these dissertations to have appeared in print is Watanabe's *Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia*. See also her "Symbolism of the Royal Lion Hunt in Assyria," in *Intellectual Life of the Ancient Near East: Papers Presented at the 43rd Rencontre assyriologique internationale Prague, July 1-5, 1996* (ed. Jiří Prosecký; Prague: Oriental Institute, 1998), 439-50.

Princeton I wish to recognize the influence of James H. Charlesworth, James F. Armstrong, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, Dennis T. Olson, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, and William A. P. Childs.

At Asbury Theological Seminary, I express my thanks to Bill T. Arnold, Sandra Richter, Ken Kinghorn, Bill Faupel, and the library staff, especially Dot James, who handled my odd and never-ending interlibrary loan requests (all to do with lions!). Of these, I owe a special debt to Bill Arnold: the loss of his office being located across the hall from mine is one that I will never quite get over.

Here at Emory University, I thank the Candler School of Theology for a course load reduction that facilitated the work of revision and I acknowledge two grants from the University Research Committee that supported the publication of this volume. Dean Russell Richey also supported the volume by underwriting the production of the index. It goes without saying that I am fortunate to have a plethora of wonderful colleagues here at Emory, especially Carol A. Newsom, John H. Hayes, David L. Petersen, Martin J. Buss, William K. Gilders, Lewis Ayres, Luke Timothy Johnson, and Steven J. Kraftchick.

I also wish to thank several research assistants: Kyle Greenwood, Al Martin, Bryan Timm, and Bill F. Reinhart. My most recent assistant, Linzie M. Treadway, assisted in numerous and critical ways, especially in checking texts, references, and bibliography, not to mention working with the maps and figures. Without her excellent work, this volume would have been greatly delayed and much the poorer. The camera-ready typesetting was done by Katherine Lewis, who performed the task with skill and grace, despite facing several significant challenges along the way. Christopher B. Hays also assisted with the final production of the book.

The revisions were aided by several colleagues: Christine Roy Yoder and James K. Mead read the whole work and offered many suggestions; Patrick D. Miller and Bill T. Arnold commented on revised portions of Chapter 5. Holly Pittman read an earlier form of the original dissertation and offered advice and critique. At the eleventh hour, I benefited from correspondence with John Huehnergard and F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp regarding linguistic issues pertaining to Appendix 1 and Christoph Uehlinger's careful editorial eye saved me from several embarrassing errors.

Finally, I thank Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger for accepting this volume into their distinguished series, and for their patience as I labored to produce what I hope is an improved work. I also thank them for the use of many drawings from the collection at Fribourg. All unattributed line drawings are the beautiful work of Ulrike Zurkinden.

It goes without saying that none of the persons mentioned above should be held responsible for the deficiencies that remain in this volume. These are mine alone and would have been fewer, no doubt, had I followed the advice of these individuals more closely. At the same time, if there is anything good

here, much of the credit should be given to these careful scholars and loyal friends.

It would be unconscionable to leave unmentioned that my greatest debts lie with my family. My own parents were formative: my piano-playing and drama-teaching mother taught me to love the arts; and my mathematician father, in the course of Geometry lessons, taught me that problems were often solved by drawing a picture. Both taught me the importance of the Church and its Scripture. My other set of parents (it hardly seems right to call them “in-laws”) has also been a constant source of love, support, and encouragement.

My best help has been my wife Holly. Our years together are now much more than seven, indeed almost twice seven, but, to echo Gen 29:20, they seem like the fastest and best of days because of her love. How I long for weeks and weeks of such days!

Much of the original dissertation was written while our now seven-year old son, Caleb, was three and four years of age. This is noteworthy as there is research that indicates that the lion is among the top fears of three-, four-, and five-year-olds.² Someday I hope to teach Caleb the theological aspects of lion imagery that this work explores. Even as young as he is, I know that he has some sense of these already. In the meantime, I’m happy to report that Caleb has suffered no ill effects from his father’s research. Our daughter, Hannah Jean, however, who was born and turned one during the original writing, and who has always acted older than she is, did not survive similarly unscathed! Yet now that she has reached the ripe old age of four, she has made peace with the lion, perhaps because she is a little Leo herself. I hope that she, too, will one day appreciate the positive (though still threatening) aspects of a God described in Scripture as a roaring lion.

Brent A. Strawn
Summer 2003
Atlanta, Georgia

² See Delinda Hutchins Gladstone, “The Self-Reported Fears of Three-, Four-, and Five-Year-Old Children” (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1990).

Abbreviations

1. LITERATURE

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
ABAT2	H. Gressmann, ed., <i>Altorientalische Bilder zum Alten Testament</i> (2d ed.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927)
ABC	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> (TCS 5; Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin, 1975)
ABD	David Noel Freedman et al., ed., <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> (6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992)
ABL	Robert Francis Harper, ed., <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters Belonging to the Kouyunjik Collections of the British Museum</i> (14 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1892-1914)
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AEL	Miriam Lichtheim, <i>Ancient Egyptian Literature</i> (3 vols.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971-1980)
ÄF	Ägyptologische Forschungen
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AGH	Erich Ebeling, <i>Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung"</i> (Berlin: Akademie, 1953)
AHw	Wolfram von Soden, <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> (3 vols.; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965-1981)
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</i>
ANEP	James B. Pritchard, ed., <i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> (2d ed; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)
ANET	James B. Pritchard, ed., <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (3rd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)
A(n)O(r)	Analecta orientalia
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series

ARAB	Daniel David Luckenbill, <i>Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia</i> (2 vols.; New York: Greenwood Press, 1968)
ARE	James Henry Breasted, <i>Ancient Records of Egypt</i> (5 vols.; New York: Russell & Russell, 1962)
ARI	A. Kirk Grayson, <i>Assyrian Royal Inscriptions</i> (2 vols.; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972-1976)
ARM(T)	Archives royales de Mari (transcrite et traduite)
AS	Assyriological Studies
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BaghM	Baghdader Mitteilungen
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BB	Biblische Beiträge
BDB	Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, <i>The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon</i> (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1979)
BF	Baghdader Forschungen
BHS	K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, ed., <i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983)
Bib	Biblica
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BIOSCS	Bulletin of the International Organization of Septuagint and Cognate Studies
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
B-L	Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, <i>Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments</i> (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1991)
BN	Biblische Notizen
BRL	Kurt Galling, ed., <i>Biblisches Reallexikon</i> (2d rev. ed.; HAT I/1; Tübingen: Mohr, 1977)
BWL	W. G. Lambert, <i>Babylonian Wisdom Literature</i> (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996)
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1956-)

CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CANE	Jack M. Sasson et al., ed., <i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i> (4 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995)
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	Continental Commentary
CIS	Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum
CMHE	Frank Moore Cross, <i>Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973)
CML	J. C. L. Gibson, <i>Canaanite Myths and Legends</i> (2d ed.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978)
CPU	<i>Concordancia de Palabras Ugaríticas</i> (3 vols.; Madrid-Zaragoza: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1995)
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
CUL	Richard E. Whitaker, <i>A Concordance of the Ugaritic Literature</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972)
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
CWSSS	Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, <i>Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals</i> (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997)
DANE	Piotr Bienkowski and Alan Millard, <i>Dictionary of the Ancient Near East</i> (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000)
DCH	D. J. A. Clines, ed., <i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993-)
DDD	Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, ed., <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> (2d ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999)
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DNWSI	J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, <i>Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions</i> (2 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995)
DOTT	D. W. Thomas, ed., <i>Documents from Old Testament Times</i> (New York: Harper & Row, 1961)
EA	El-Amarna tablets, according to the edition of J. A. Knudtzon, <i>Die El-Amarna-Tafeln</i> (2 vols.; Aalen: Otto Zeller, 1964), continued in A. F. Rainey, <i>El-Amarna Tablets, 359-379</i> (2d rev. ed.; AOAT 8; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978)

<i>EDB</i>	David Noel Freedman, ed., <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i> (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000)
<i>EI</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i> (16 vols.; New York: Macmillan, 1972)
EPRO	Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
<i>ER</i>	Mircea Eliade, ed., <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> (16 vols.; New York: MacMillan, 1987)
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>GAG</i>	Wolfram von Soden, <i>Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik</i> (2d ed.; AnOr 47; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969)
GCT	Gender, Culture, Theory
GKC	E. Kautzsch, ed., <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> (trans. A. E. Cowley; 2d ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910)
<i>HALAT</i>	L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament</i> (5 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967-1995)
<i>HALOT</i>	L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson; 5 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994-2000)
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
Herm	Hermeneia
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDB</i>	G. A. Buttrick, ed., <i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> (4 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1962)
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IM	Tablets in the collections of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>ISBE</i>	Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., <i>The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988)
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>

JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAI	H. Donner and W. Röllig, <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> (2d ed.; 3 vols.; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966-1969)
KB	Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, ed., <i>Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros</i> (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1985)
KBo	Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi
KTU	Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, ed., <i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places (KTU: second, enlarged edition)</i> (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995)
LÄ	W. Helck, E. Otto, and W. Westendorf, ed., <i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> (7 vols.; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972)
LAE	William Kelly Simpson, ed., <i>The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, and Poetry</i> (new ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973)
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (9th ed. with rev. supplement; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
MARI	<i>Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires</i>
MVAG	Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-ägyptischen Gesellschaft (44 vols.; 1896-1939)
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NBL	Manfred Görg and Bernhard Lang, ed., <i>Neues Bibel-Lexikon</i> (Zurich: Benziger Verlag, 1995)
NCB	New Century Bible

NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
NEAEHL	E. Stern, ed., <i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavation in the Holy Land</i> (4 vols.; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992)
NERT	Walter Beyerlin, ed., <i>Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978)
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDNTT	Colin Brown, ed., <i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1986)
NIDOTTE	Willem A. VanGemeren, <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> (5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996)
NIV	New International Version
NJPSV	<i>Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i> (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBO.SA	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis Series Archaeologica
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OCD	S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, <i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (3rd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
OEAE	Donald B. Redford, ed., <i>The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt</i> (3 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)
OEANE	Eric M. Meyers, ed., <i>The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East</i> (5 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)
OLA	Orientalia Iovaniensia analecta
OLZ	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
Or	<i>Orientalia</i>
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	James H. Charlesworth, ed., <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983-1985)
OTS	Old Testament Studies
P(d)Ä	Probleme der Ägyptologie
PLO	Porta Linguarum Orientalium
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae

<i>QDAP</i>	<i>Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine</i>
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
<i>REg</i>	<i>Revue d'égyptologie</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
<i>RIMA</i>	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
<i>RIMB</i>	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods
<i>RIA</i>	Erich Ebeling et al., ed., <i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i> (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1926-)
<i>RS</i>	Ras Shamra
<i>SAA</i>	State Archives of Assyria
<i>SAAS</i>	State Archives of Assyria Studies
<i>SANTAG</i>	SANTAG: Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde
<i>SBLDS</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SBLRBS</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
<i>SBLWAW</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
<i>SBM</i>	Stuttgarter biblische Monographien
<i>SBS</i>	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
<i>SBT</i>	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SEL</i>	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici</i>
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
<i>STC</i>	L. W. King, <i>The Seven Tablets of Creation</i> (2 vols.; London: Luzac, 1902)
<i>Tanakh</i>	see NJPSV
<i>TCS</i>	Texts from Cuneiform Sources
<i>TDNT</i>	G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, ed., <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> (trans. G. W. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976)
<i>TDOT</i>	G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, ed., <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-)
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TLOT</i>	Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, ed., <i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (trans. Mark E. Biddle; 3 vols.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997)
<i>TSSI</i>	J. C. L. Gibson, <i>Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions</i> (3 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1971-1982)
<i>TT</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>

<i>TWOT</i>	R. L. Harris and G. L. Archer, Jr., ed., <i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> (2 vols.; Chicago: Moody, 1980)
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>UT</i>	C. H. Gordon, <i>Ugaritic Textbook</i> (AnOr 38; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965)
VA	<i>Varia Aegyptiaca</i>
VAS	Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WÄS	A. Erman and H. Grapow, <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> (7 vols.; Berlin: Akademie, 1971)
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WOO	Wiener Offene Orientalistik
WUS	J. Aistleitner, <i>Das Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache</i> (3rd ed.; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1967)
YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
YOS	Yale Oriental Series, Texts
<i>ZÄS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

2. OTHER

Abb.	Abbildung
AD	<i>anno Domini</i>
Akk	Akkadian
Arab	Arabic
Aram	Aramaic
BA	Biblical Aramaic
BC	before Christ
BCE	before the Common Era
BH	Biblical Hebrew
c	common (gender)
c.	century
ca.	<i>circa</i>
CE	Common Era
cf.	<i>confer</i> (compare)
col(s).	column(s)

D	Dynasty (e.g., D18 = Dynasty XVIII) <i>or</i> the doubled stem (Hebrew = Piel)
diss.	dissertation
DN(s)	Divine Name(s)
Dp	Passive of the doubled stem (Hebrew = Pual)
Dtr	Author(s)/editor(s) responsible for DtrH
DtrH	Deuteronomistic History
EB(A)	Early Bronze (Age)
ed.	edition <i>or</i> editor(s) <i>or</i> edited by
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (for example)
esp.	especially
et al.	<i>et alii/alii</i> (and others)
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> (and the rest)
f	feminine
fig(s).	figure(s)
frg(s).	fragment(s)
G	Basic stem (Hebrew = Qal)
Gilg	Gilgamesh Epic
GN(s)	geographical name(s)
H	Hiphil
HB	Hebrew Bible
Heb	Hebrew
HtD	(Hebrew) Hithpael stem
IA	Iron Age
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (in the same place)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (that is)
illus(s).	illustration(s)
K	Kethib (written)
Lat	Old Latin (see OL); superscript letters indicate manuscripts – e.g., Lat ^S = fragments from St. Gall
LB(A)	Late Bronze (Age)
LXX	Septuagint; superscript letters indicate manuscripts or editions – e.g., LXX ^{A, L, M, Qmg, V} = codex Alexandrinus, Lagarde's edition, codex Coislinianus, codex Marchalianus (margin), and codex Venetus, respectively
m	masculine
MB(A)	Middle Bronze (Age)
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
MT	The Masoretic Text (as presented in <i>BHS</i>)
N	N stem (Hebrew = Niphal)
n.	note, footnote
n.d.	no date (cited)
no(s).	number(s)
n.p.	no place <i>or</i> no publisher (cited)

Nr(n).	Nummer(n)
NT	New Testament
obv.	obverse
OL	Old Latin (see Lat)
OT	Old Testament
pl.	plural
PN(s)	Personal/proper Name(s)
Q	Qere (read)
repr.	reprint(ed) edition
rev.	reverse <i>or</i> revised
RN	royal name
s	singular
sec(s)	section(s)
Syr	Syriac
Taf.	Tafel(n)
Targ	Targum(s)
Ugar	Ugaritic
v(v).	verse(s)
Vulg	Vulgate
WD	Wadi Daliyeh
*	hypothetical, reconstructed form
//	(the text/word is) parallel (to)
	(the text/word is) parallel (to)
/	line break/division
< >	enclose emendations
()	enclose words added for sake of translation
[]	broken text, enclose reconstructions; <i>or</i> editorial addition to cited text
⌈⌋	partially damaged text; reading uncertain
°	over consonant(s) indicates text is damaged; reading uncertain
§(§)	section(s)
<	derived/developed from
>	becomes, goes to
=	equivalent (approximate) to

3. ADDITIONAL NOTES

Translations: Translations are my own unless otherwise attributed or indicated.

Versification: Versification follows the Hebrew text.

Citation of Cuneiform Materials:

- a. Cuneiform materials are cited according to the source from which they were taken. At such points when the first editions were unavailable to me, the citation follows *CAD* and/or *AHw*. There is thus a discrepancy: texts are presented in syllabic transcription when the editions were available; at other times, they appear in normalized form via the dictionaries. While this is somewhat infelicitous, I have provided enough information that the interested reader should have no problem tracking down a particular reference. The abbreviations employed, if not already in the above lists, may be found in *CAD*.
- b. Additionally, I have altered published transcriptions, be they from *CAD*, *AHw*, or some other source, in three ways: a) I supply the logogram wherever possible; b) I employ the 1cs suffix *-ya* instead of *-ja* or *-ia*; and c) I transcribe *j/æ* even if the printed edition does not indicate the diacritic. These alterations are made consistently throughout the work.

Dates: All dates are BC/BCE unless otherwise indicated.

“Is—is he a man?” asked Lucy.

“Aslan a man!” said Mr. Beaver sternly. “Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-Sea. Don’t you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion—the Lion, the great Lion.”

“Ooh!” said Susan, “I’d thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

“That you will, dearie, and make no mistake,” said Mrs. Beaver; “if there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”

“Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy.

“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver; “don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

– C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*

וְכֵן עַז מֵאֲרִי

– Judges 14:18

Chapter 1

God, Language, and Lions

“When one is perfectly familiar with a religious symbol from one’s own tradition and personal experience, and when one finds this symbol in another tradition, *more rather than less* effort will be required to penetrate behind the face of the symbol to grasp what it means to the other.”¹

“It is metaphor above all that gives perspicuity, pleasure, and a foreign air, and it cannot be learnt from anyone else; but we must make use of metaphors and epithets that are appropriate.”²

“Wer das Dichten will verstehen,
Muß in’s Land der Dichtung gehen;
Wer den Dichter will verstehen,
Muß in Dichters Lande gehen.”³

1.1. ON THE PROBLEM OF GOD-LANGUAGE

One of most significant questions raised in late twentieth-century theology was that of appropriate terminology for God. This question has continued into the twenty-first century and promises to be around for a long time to come. It has been feminists who have led the way in identifying the latent, if not explicit, patriarchy (or, perhaps more precisely, andrarchy) that often resides in traditional, masculine God-language.⁴ In its place, other alternatives have been offered: for example, a preference for female pronouns and roles in place of male ones. This makes perfect sense as many female images for God are found

¹ Ida Glaser, “Teaching the Old Testament in the Context of Islam,” in *Make the Old Testament Live: From Curriculum to Classroom* (ed. R. S. Hess and G. J. Wenham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 135 (emphasis mine).

² Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric* (trans. J. H. Freese; Aristotle 22; LCL 193; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 3.2.9 (§1405a; 354–55).

³ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan* (2 vols.; ed. Hendrik Birus; Johann Wolfgang Goethe sämtliche Werke 3/1–2; Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994), 1:137. See also *ibid.*, 1:266: “Wer den Dichter will verstehen / Muß in Dichters Lande gehen; / Er im Orient sich freue / Daß das Alte sey das Neue.”

⁴ See, e.g., Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, “Feminist Perspectives on Bible and Theology: An Introduction to Selected Issues and Literature,” *Int* 62 (1988): 5–18; *idem*, “Feminist Uses of Biblical Materials,” in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Letty M. Russell; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 55–64, esp. 57–59; Marjo Christina Annette Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (UBL 8; Münster: UGARIT-Verlag, 1990), 29–31; Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 164–77.

throughout Scripture, though admittedly not with the same frequency as male ones, and are an important and appropriate resource for God-language. The existence of such images serves as an enduring counter-testimony and corrective to any perspective on God-talk that would be exclusively male or explicitly misogynistic.

But there are problems with a simple replacement of masculine God-language with female equivalents. Most obvious among these problems is the fact that the God of the Bible is—despite many anthropomorphic portrayals—much more than a man and, indeed, certainly beyond, at least according to some traditions, human gender in general.⁵ That is, Yahweh is *not human*, whether that be male or female.⁶ To a large degree, then, any human description—masculine or feminine—fails to capture the essence of God's being or nature. Of course, this is nothing new; many a theologian has abandoned the quest to speak of God positively and has instead opted for the *via negativa*, resorting to apophaticism to speak of God and God's being. So, too, some theorists of God-language have moved away from anthropomorphic categories (be they male or female) toward ideational, relational, or operational ones.⁷

In one sense, this development may be seen as a distinct improvement. Typically, however, even these newer categories are still heavily anthropomorphic. Or, at the very least, they can be said to be anthropocentric. This, coupled with the realization that the biblical material is much more explicit (at times even embarrassingly so) and pluriform in its God-language and God-imagery, would seem to indicate that a new way, or at least an additional resource, is necessary in the continuing and pressing quest for

⁵ See Num 23:19; Isa 31:8; Hos 11:9; Job 32:13; and Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), esp. 188–89. “The monotheist God is not sexually male. He is not at all phallic, and does not represent male virility....God is asexual, or transsexual, or metasexual (depending on how we view this phenomenon), but ‘he’ is never sexed” (ibid., 188). Even so, Frymer-Kensky admits that God's figuring in the Hebrew Bible is nevertheless “predominantly [as a] male god, referred to by the masculine pronoun (never by the feminine), and often conceived of in...quintessentially masculine images” (ibid.).

⁶ The combination of feminine and masculine elements in the figuring of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible may be further indication that ancient Israel conceived of God as being beyond (though perhaps the ground of?) male and female gender (cf. feminist discussions of Gen 1:26–27). Another possibility, of course, is that the combination of gender roles in the figuring of Yahweh is a religio-historical result of Israel's monotheizing tendency which meant that Yahweh adopted, adapted, and accumulated aspects that were normally ascribed to other deities, especially female deities. See, e.g., Othmar Keel, “Yahweh as Mother Goddess,” *Theology Digest* 36 (1989): 233–36; idem, “Wie männlich ist der Gott Israels?,” *Diakonia* 24 (1993): 179–86; Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 241. Patrick D. Miller has argued similarly in “The Absence of the Goddess in Israelite Religion,” *HAR* 10 (1986): 239–48; and idem, *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 23–40. See further Chapter 5 in the present work (§5.4).

⁷ See, e.g., Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 177–92, for God as “Friend.”

appropriate and meaningful God-language. For obvious reasons, an excellent place to begin theorizing and theologizing is with the biblical material itself. That is, how do the biblical texts themselves speak, and how do they speak specifically, *of God*?⁸ Herein lies part of the problem, of course, since these texts do speak of God in anthropomorphic categories and do speak of God in gendered terms—as both male and female, mother and father. But there is certainly more to these texts, even when they so speak of God, and herein lies their potential promise. To take an example from the New Testament, in Luke 13:34/Matt 23:27, Jesus applies a female image to himself to describe his feelings for Jerusalem. Yet in the play of this imagery, Jesus is not only figured as a mother, but specifically as a *mother-hen*. This image from the Gospels evokes and is probably dependent on several passages from the Old Testament, including Isa 31:5, Deut 32:11, and Ps 91:4. The mother-hen image is also found in 2 Esdras 1:30, a text that places this image and language in God's own mouth and that may be closer in influence and thought to Luke and Matthew than the other Old Testament texts.

At least three insights can be derived from biblical passages like these (and their imagistic language) that highlight the potential significance that such texts have for the contemporary God-language discussion:

- First, the Hebrew Bible, as well as the New Testament and the deuterocanonical literature, often portrays God in *non-anthropomorphic* categories. The images evoked in the passages above are theriomorphic or zoomorphic, but there are hundreds of other images drawn from both the animate and inanimate worlds.⁹
- Second, these non-anthropomorphic images are often preferred when a gendered image is used, though this is not true in every case.

⁸ For a significant recent attempt to answer this question, which is built on rhetorical-critical strategies, see Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).

⁹ To my knowledge, the most comprehensive and systematic presentation of the Hebrew material (largely via comparison with the Ugaritic corpus) remains that of Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*. In addition to typical anthropomorphic categories (father, mother, etc.), Korpel also discusses human properties (body, sex, sensory perception, emotions, activity, etc.), societal relations (love and marriage, family, friendship, balance of power, life and death, occupations, etc.), theriomorphic or zoomorphic descriptions (mammals, birds, fish, snakes, etc.), and physiomorphic descriptions (cosmology, geology, geography, hydrology, flora, natural phenomena, etc.).

- Third, these non-anthropomorphic images can be gendered or ungendered images, with the latter being the case for physiomorphic descriptions of the divine.¹⁰

These points make it clear that non-anthropomorphic imagery, specifically theriomorphic or physiomorphic imagery, is a potentially significant resource for God-language. Indeed, many feminists have already noted this, especially insofar as some of the female God-imagery in the Bible is associated with animals. Yet the importance of non-anthropomorphic imagery goes beyond the debate on God-language, as important as that debate is. For one thing, the repository of non-anthropomorphic God-language is quite large. This alone merits attention and testifies to the richness of the biblical figuring of God. But an appeal to and the use of non-anthropomorphic God-language and God-imagery can be supported further by several important developments. The recent surge of interest in animals, especially in theology and ethics—including discussions of the emotional lives of animals, their ethical treatment, and so forth—could be pointed to in the case of zoomorphic imagery; the ongoing concerns of the ecological movement in its various forms should be noted with regard to physiomorphic imagery. In the case of the former, recent work has stressed the important role that animals play in the divine economy; it also indicates that animals do, in fact, have the kind of faculties that make ideational and relational categories such as “friend” appropriate and meaningful.¹¹ In the case of the latter, theorists have stressed the theological datum of creation and all that this signifies for ecology and humanity’s place within the world.¹²

Yet another observation could be made: The deep-embeddedness of non-anthropomorphic imagery in the biblical texts has led to its long-standing use

¹⁰ But, as Hebrew lacks a neuter, it must be admitted that every image is, to some degree, gendered.

¹¹ See, e.g., Stephen H. Webb, *On God and Dogs: A Christian Theology of Compassion for Animals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Charles Birsch and Lukas Vischer, *Living with the Animals: The Community of God’s Creatures* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997); Bernd Janowski, Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, and Uwe Gießmer, ed., *Gefährten und Feinde des Menschen: Das Tier in der Lebenswelt des alten Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993); Margot Lasher, *And the Animals Will Teach You: Discovering Ourselves Through Our Relationships with Animals* (New York: Berkeley, 1996); George Page, *Inside the Animal Mind* (New York: Doubleday, 1999). Andrew Linzey is a major theorist in the theological discussion of animals. See, most recently, his *Animal Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) and the literature cited there.

¹² The literature here is vast. See briefly, The Presbyterian Eco-Justice Task Force, *Keeping and Healing the Creation* (Louisville: Committee on Social Witness Policy, Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.], 1989); Patrick D. Miller, “The State of the World,” *TT* 56 (1999): 147–51; Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

in the history of God-language and God-imagery.¹³ This is not only accurate historically; it also holds true for practice and liturgy. Animal imagery, for instance, has played a significant role in Christian liturgy, especially as mediated through the Lamb image (*Agnus Dei*) of the New Testament. Since the days of John the Baptist—if the Fourth Gospel is to be believed—Jesus has been called “the Lamb of God [ὁ ἄμνος τοῦ θεοῦ] that takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29) or, to put it as John the Seer did, as “the Lamb [τοῦ ἁρνίου] that was slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). The liturgy has been no less precise. And while these statements are christological, the familiarity of the image of God as Rock, liturgically and otherwise, is enough to show that the same scenario holds true for theocentric speech.

In short, then, recent developments in God-language theory seem to coalesce quite nicely, though perhaps unintentionally, with some important elements of biblical imagery as well as theological tradition, practice, and liturgy. When all this is taken together, it would seem that such non-anthropomorphic imagery is an important new (but also very old) resource to draw upon for contemporary God-imagery and God-language. But it remains to be seen why one should use or appeal to this resource. What is gained in doing so? That is, when Hosea summons animal imagery to describe Yahweh as a (mother) bear, bereaved of her cubs, what is the significance, content, and function of this image?¹⁴ In short, what does it *mean* when animal imagery is used for God?¹⁵ And how is such imagery helpful and productive theologically?

1.2. METAPHOR, SIMILE, AND LIONS: A BRIEF THEORETICAL STATEMENT

To answer such questions one must engage not only imagery in general and theological imagery in particular, but also, and more specifically, *metaphor*. Metaphor has much bearing on the discussion at hand since feminists have shown that “God as Father”—and other masculine God-language—is to a great extent, if not in total essence, metaphorical. But this important insight—the metaphorical nature of God-language in general—can be reversed to produce another, closely related, insight: the nature of metaphor as language for God.

¹³ The same could be said, incidentally, for female imagery in general. See Kathleen E. McVey, “In Praise of Sophia: The Witness of Tradition,” and Paul Rorem, “Lover and Mother: Medieval Language for God and the Soul,” both in *Women, Gender, and Christian Community* (ed. Jane Dempsey Douglass and James F. Kay; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 34–45 and 46–54, respectively.

¹⁴ See Hos 13:8. שָׂכַל and שָׂכַל/שָׂכַל are typically used of mothers (BDB 1013–14; *HALOT* 4:1488–89, 1491–92).

¹⁵ As the present study is focused on animal imagery, and leonine imagery specifically, there will be no further discussion of physiomorphic imagery. See Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 560–613 for a catalogue of Hebrew physiomorphic imagery with reference to the Ugaritic texts.

Increasingly philosophers of language (and, following suit, theologians) have argued that *all* language is metaphorical and that includes, and is perhaps especially applicable to, religious language about God.¹⁶ While this does not mean that the nature of metaphor *per se* and the nature and use of religious-theological metaphors cannot be treated independently of discourse about God (theology proper), one should always be aware of the close connection: what can be learned from the analysis of a theological metaphor may have much to say about religious and theological language about God as a whole, just as the latter may have much to say regarding specific metaphors for God.

Until fairly recently, however, the significance of metaphor in and as religious-theological discourse was taken up only sporadically by various theologians, and then usually negatively.¹⁷ The same is true of biblical scholarship.¹⁸ The study of metaphor proper begins with Aristotle, who is generally viewed as the progenitor of the so-called “substitution theory” of

¹⁶ Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 35. Even introductory textbooks acknowledge this. See, e.g., Henry Jackson Flanders, Jr., Robert Wilson Crapps, and David Anthony Smith, *People of the Covenant: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (4th ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 103: “Even the most sophisticated theological and philosophical language about God is anthropomorphic because all language is of human creation and God is not.” One thinks of Paul Tillich’s rejoinder to Karl Barth in their on-going debate over natural theology: “And the famous ‘No’ of Karl Barth against any kind of natural theology, even of man’s ability to ask the question of God, in the last analysis is a self-deception, as the use of human language in speaking of revelation shows” (Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2: *Existence and The Christ* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957], 14). Literary theorists have pointed out the metaphorical nature of language in general, be it related to God or not. See, e.g., Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (2d ed.; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 126: “All language...is ineradicably metaphorical, working by tropes and figures; it is a mistake to believe that any language is *literally* literal. Philosophy, law, political theory work by metaphor just as poems do, and so are just as fictional” (emphasis his). Such a statement is rather typical of philosophers of language. Still, it seems obvious that while all language may be metaphorical, not all language is *equally so*.

¹⁷ The following overview is indebted to the overview found in Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 4–75. See *ibid.*, 4–34 for a treatment of theologians on metaphor (Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Barth, etc.). Prior to the rise of more recent contextual theologies in the late-twentieth century, most theological understandings of metaphor were negative (e.g., metaphor was the result of God’s condescending to human speech, the meager human understanding of God, and so forth). The one notable exception that Korpel highlights is Luther who argued, probably under the influence of his ongoing debate with Zwingli on the Eucharist, that a word used as a predicate becomes a new word. To say “Christ is a flower,” means Christ *is* a flower, though not a natural one (see *ibid.*, 6–8). At this point Luther is anticipating some of the later developments in metaphor theory.

¹⁸ See the review in Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOTSup 65; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 25–67. A notable exception to the judgment made above is found in the study of metaphor and image-analysis in New Testament parable research (see *ibid.*, 35–42). Nielsen opines that the corresponding lack of studies in Old Testament imagery is largely due to an overemphasis on historical-critical concerns (*ibid.*, 33–35).

metaphor, wherein a non-literal item is used as a metaphor for a literal item.¹⁹ The following example is instructive:

I mean, e.g., the wine bowl is to Dionysus as the shield to Ares: so one will call the wine bowl “Dionysus’ shield,” and the shield “Ares’ wine bowl.”²⁰

All one has to do in this scenario, theoretically, is reverse the substitution to understand the meaning of the metaphor. Although not an entirely accurate view of Aristotle’s own understanding of metaphor,²¹ this perspective nevertheless became the dominant theory for understanding the way metaphors work for the next two millennia. It was perhaps the dissatisfaction caused by this overly-simplistic model, coupled with the fact that metaphor was perceived as primarily stylistic, poetic, or ornamental, that led to the general neglect of metaphor in theological studies during this period.²²

The negative assessment and neglect of metaphor was only reversed by twentieth-century philosophers of language. A major turning point came in the works of I. A. Richards and Max Black. Richards critiqued the idea that metaphor was merely decorative and argued that there were two elements at work in a metaphor: the *tenor* (the meaning or idea of the metaphor; for example, human greed) and the *vehicle* (the figure of the metaphor; for example, likening humans to wolves).²³ The meaning of a metaphor is produced, not by the substitution of these two elements—as “Aristotle’s theory” would have it—but by their *interaction*.²⁴ The sum of the parts is therefore greater than the parts themselves. Black picked up on Richards’ work and developed it further, formulating in fuller fashion what is now called the

¹⁹ Aristotle’s view of metaphor can be found in Chapter 21 of his *Poetics* (§1457b). For the Greek text and English translation, see Aristotle, *Poetics* (trans. Stephen Halliwell) in *Aristotle Poetics, Longinus On the Sublime, Demetrius On Style* (Aristotle 23; 2d ed.; LCL 199; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 104–107.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ For a defense of Aristotle as not solely a proponent of the substitution theory, see Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 37 (cf. 615–16), who points out that in the very same passage from *Poetics* (§1457b, trans. Halliwell, 106–107), Aristotle goes on to discuss metaphors where there is no known equivalent that can be substituted in the metaphor.

²² The origin of the discussion for Aristotle was primarily within the context of rhetoric and poetics (Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 35–36). For the former, see, e.g., Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, 3.2.7–3.4.4 (§§1405–1407; trans. Freese, 354–71). On metaphor as “ornamental,” see Dan R. Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol, and Story* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), 113–14. See also Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 39 and n. 14 who discusses Hobbes’ “empiricist attack on metaphor” which also relegated metaphor to a secondary status.

²³ I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), esp. 89–136.

²⁴ Ibid., 93: “In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction.” On Richards, see further Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 39–42, 616.

“interaction theory” of metaphor.²⁵ Black thought the substitution theory inadequate because it reduces the metaphor to a simple stylistic device and begs the question as to why an author/speaker did not simply use the literal descriptor, which the substitution theory posits is the point of the metaphor, as that would have been both easier and clearer. But Black took this critique further by also arguing against the “comparison theory” of metaphor.²⁶ In the comparison theory, there is an analogy or similarity between the literal meaning and the metaphorical transformation of that meaning. In this case, all metaphors are similes (a point Black does not want to admit, at least not completely) so that one could or should simply insert “like” before every metaphorical statement. To use the example *par excellence* in metaphor theory, “man is a wolf” becomes “man is *like* a wolf (because of greed or the like).”

In the place of such perspectives, Black advocated an *interactive* view. Not only is each element (the primary/principal subject and the secondary/subsidiary subject)²⁷ in the metaphor interactive, but each is also mutually influential on and influenced by the context (frame) of the metaphor. Metaphors work “by applying to the principal subject a system of ‘associated implications’ characteristic of the subsidiary subject.”²⁸ Yet the interaction is even more complex. Not every association of wolves, for example, is applicable to human beings—at least not in every metaphor!—and these inapplicable associations will thus be passed over in favor of those that can be closely related to human beings, depending on the tenor chosen. But the secondary subject of the metaphor is also affected by its relationship to the primary subject; as Black observes in one of his more famous formulations: “If to call a man a wolf is to put him in a special light, we must not forget that the metaphor makes the wolf seem more human than he otherwise would.”²⁹

Subsequent theorists have built on the interaction theory developed by Richards and Black, though they have also nuanced it. Paul Ricoeur’s work on metaphor, for instance, is an excellent example of both.³⁰ Ricoeur, who supports the interaction theory, which he calls the tension theory, has nevertheless added to it in significant ways, most notably perhaps in his

²⁵ See Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

²⁶ See *ibid.*, 37; Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 45.

²⁷ In the case of “man is a wolf,” “man” is the principal (or primary) subject and “wolf” is the subsidiary (or secondary) subject. See Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 39–40; *idem*, “More about Metaphor,” *Dialectica* 31 (1977): 431–57, esp. 441–42.

²⁸ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 41.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 44; Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 54. Cf. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 71: “So if God is called ‘Father,’ the interaction-view of metaphor implies that in a way such an epithet may honour a father too, making him seem more god-like.” One should note, of course, that the same holds true for mothers when maternal imagery or metaphor is used of God.

³⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

emphasis on the multiple levels of metaphor. While most previous work tended to focus on the level of word (or noun), Ricoeur wants to draw equal attention to the sentence (semantics) and to discourse (hermeneutics) as levels able to carry metaphor.³¹ At these higher levels, metaphor is a predication, a statement, and, as such, is not always translatable. And, even when it can be translated, this is certainly not done with a simplistic, one-to-one correspondence as the substitution view might imply.

Still, in Ricoeur's opinion, the interaction theory is not without problems, nor the substitution theory without merit. He observes that the element of comparison or resemblance, the hallmark of the substitution theory, is not incompatible with the interaction perspective.³² Indeed, metaphor is "a trope of resemblance" and "its explanation is grounded in a theory of substitution."³³ Hence, "the traditional rhetorical definition [of metaphor] cannot be eliminated because the word remains the carrier of the effect of metaphorical meaning" though the metaphor itself "is produced at the level of the statement as a whole."³⁴ So, even though the meaning of a metaphor is not literal (one-to-one correlation), it is nevertheless a meaning dependent on resemblance—a vision of the similar—though this similarity is only partial.³⁵ The metaphor is also dissimilar. "Thus, resemblance itself must be understood as a tension between identity and difference in the predicative operation set in motion by semantic innovation."³⁶ Or, to use Korpel's words, "[i]n the dialectic tension between 'is' and 'is not,' between congruence and incongruence, lies the truth of the metaphor."³⁷

Other theorists have also made significant contributions to this discussion. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, for example, have argued that metaphors (at least systematic examples of such) are not simply elements of language, but comprise, rather, a large part of our conceptual system. Hence, metaphor is not solely a language-structure, it is also a way of acting and living.³⁸ In this light,

³¹ Ibid., 133; Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 47.

³² See Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 5–6 and 173–215.

³³ Ibid., 3, but note that the context here is the word-level of metaphor.

³⁴ Ibid., 5; see further 101–172.

³⁵ Ibid., 4. The metaphor is not simply a case of "deviant denomination" (word-level), but is also a case of "impertinent predication" (see further 65–100). Cf. Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 54.

³⁶ Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 6.

³⁷ Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 48 (emphasis hers; cf. 47–48, 616), referring to the seventh study ("Metaphor and Reference") in Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 216–56. It is here that Ricoeur argues that "the 'place' of metaphor, its most intimate and ultimate abode, is neither the name, nor the sentence, nor even discourse, but the copula of the verb *to be*. The metaphorical 'is' at once signifies both 'is not' and 'is like'" (ibid., 7). Cf. also Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 61; and Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job* (JSOTSup 112; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 26.

³⁸ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3 and *passim*. For Lakoff and Johnson, see Korpel, *A Rift in the*

the cultural-connectedness of metaphorical speech becomes increasingly important. That is, metaphors are not only contextual on the linguistic or semantic levels, they are also *culturally* contextual.³⁹ Not all cultures treat time as a commodity that can be spent, saved, or wasted *à la* the metaphor “Time Is Money.”⁴⁰ When someone uses such a metaphor, therefore, it implies, depends on, and requires a culture wherein such a metaphor makes sense.⁴¹

A final theorist who deserves mention here is Earl R. Mac Cormac.⁴² Mac Cormac applied the concept of “fuzzy-sets” to the study of metaphor. Metaphors are constructed with (or comprised of) elements—semantic sets—not all of which can be defined precisely. Not only is this so, but the very nature of metaphor is to take members from one set and make them a part of another by evoking both similarities and dissimilarities. There is an inherent ambiguity, therefore, in the construction of metaphors, especially if there is no context accompanying the metaphor that clarifies or explains it.

This is but a brief summary of what has become a very lively and productive multi-disciplinary discussion that ranges across theology, philosophy, linguistics, and literature.⁴³ While much more could be said, several pertinent points may nevertheless be drawn from the above:

- Metaphors are *comparative*—tropes of resemblance—but in an interactive or tensive way (Aristotle, Richards, Black, Ricoeur);
- Metaphors are *contextually conditioned*; that context includes both semantic and cultural contexts and that conditioning impacts the construction, reception, and

Clouds, 48–52, 616. Note also George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

³⁹ In this sense, the Dutch theologian Harry Kuitert, who argued that in the Bible God is not so much presented anthropomorphically as hebreomorphically, is at least partially right (see Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 17–19 for a discussion of Kuitert).

⁴⁰ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 7–9.

⁴¹ See Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 50 for an example of a metaphor (“A Mountain Is A Person”) that is, in Lakoff and Johnson’s view, “marginal” in contemporary language but which is actually quite extended and effective in both Ugaritic and Hebrew.

⁴² Earl R. Mac Cormac, *A Cognitive Theory of Metaphor* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985). For more on Mac Cormac, see Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 52–54.

⁴³ See further the following massive bibliographies that have been devoted to the study of metaphor: Warren A. Shibles, *Metaphor: An Annotated Bibliography and History* (Whitewater: Language Press, 1971); Jean-Pierre van Noppen, et al., *Metaphor: A Bibliography of Post-1970 Publications* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1985); Jean-Pierre van Noppen and Edith Hols, *Metaphor II: A Classified Bibliography of Publications 1985 to 1990* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1990).

interpretation of metaphor (Black, Ricoeur, Lakoff and Johnson);⁴⁴

- Metaphors are *polyvalent* and, consequently, also somewhat ambiguous, ambivalent, or at least open-ended (Mac Cormac).⁴⁵

Each of these points can be applied to, firstly, the study and use of metaphor in religious and theological language. This subject, too, has received no small amount of secondary treatment with various conclusions being drawn.⁴⁶ Brueggemann, for instance, has argued that the widespread use of metaphor—“a central element in Israel’s articulation of Yahweh”—in the Old Testament indicates that

speech is kept open, in the awareness that the noun, in our theological case *Yahweh*, resists any articulation that gives excessive closure. Metaphor is yet another case in point indicating that Israel’s theological rhetoric is at its best evocative and not descriptive....The use of metaphor again calls our attention to the playful, open quality of Israel’s most serious speech and its theological imagination.⁴⁷

In this light, perhaps monotheism is even *required* to practice metaphorical theology so as to avoid an idolatrous reduction of God.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ See further Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 39, 44; Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 28–29; Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 71; Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 42, 48.

⁴⁵ See further Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 74, 618; and Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 26–27. But note the important qualification of Nielsen: “But that there can be no exhaustive representation of the image does not mean that nothing whatsoever can be derived from it” (*There is Hope for a Tree*, 47).

⁴⁶ See, e.g., Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*; idem, *Speaking in Parables: A Study of Metaphor and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); idem, *Models of God*; Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985); Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987); Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language*, 112–33.

⁴⁷ Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 70 (emphasis his). In contrast to many of Brueggemann’s statements, however, not all metaphor theory permits this play to be *endless*. Cf. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 73: “Because metaphor involves the comparison of two (or more) spheres of associations in order to identify the elements shared by the two sets, metaphor itself, in combination with its verbal context and situational context, acts as a rule to limit the number of admissible associations constituting the fuzzy set ‘tenor.’”

⁴⁸ So Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 70–71. See above on the concept of Yahweh adopting or absorbing aspects of other deities. Note also Klaus Koenen, “‘Süßes geht vom Starken aus’ (Ri 14,14): Vergleiche zwischen Gott und Tier im Alten Testament,” *EvT* 55 (1995): 174; and Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 77: “Because of its special capacity to hint at a truth that cannot be described adequately in terms of general human experience, metaphor is the ideal vehicle to talk about God whom ‘no one has ever seen.’” Even so, the opposite problem is also apparent. Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 249 n. 2: “If the Israelite wished to speak of his Creator, it was very important that

Secondly, metaphor theory has also cast significant light on the interpretation of metaphor itself and on the proper understanding of how a metaphor functions. This can be briefly summarized:

- Metaphor is a way to speak of one thing (A) by means of another thing (B), the properties of which do not normally belong to it.⁴⁹
- This construal creates a complex relationship between A and B in which some (though not all) of B's qualities are transferred to A, thereby *organizing subsequent perception* of A.⁵⁰
- This construal also affects B, however, insofar as it can be likened to A in the first place.

The foregoing discussion clearly presumes a number of important ideas. Perhaps the most significant of these is that both the user of the metaphor and the receiver of the metaphor must share an understanding of B for the metaphor to “work.” The user presumably knows *both* A and B (though not necessarily), but the receiver need not know A, as A will be defined *in terms of B* (and, according to the interaction theory, a bit of vice versa as well). For example, a child may have never seen an elephant. So, when his mother tries to explain to him what one is like by using a metaphor (or simile)—“An elephant is like a gray house with legs on it, like a small mountain that moves, like a giant horse with a stretched nose”⁵¹—she is employing images and things with which he is familiar. Hence, the presumption of shared knowledge on the part of the user and the receiver of the metaphor is critical to its proper functioning.⁵²

Yet this raises a significant problem. When both the user and receiver of a metaphor are contemporaries, the listener (receiver) has the ability to ask the

the language should not imply an identification of God with that which is created. Under the ban on images, this would be blasphemy. The language must therefore have such a form that it avoids blasphemy without ending up in tautology lacking in informative value.”

⁴⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics*, §1457b (trans. Halliwell, 105); Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 70; and Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 69: “The metaphor is the deliberate use of a set of signs (vehicle) against the rule...in order to give the set of signs a new meaning by association (tenor)” (emphasis hers).

⁵⁰ Lakoff and Johnson would also argue that it structures our *actions* relating to the metaphor (*Metaphors We Live By*). Ricoeur likens the formative and constitutive power of metaphor to that of fiction (*The Rule of Metaphor*, 6). See also Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 32, 55–56.

⁵¹ Both the scenario and the explanation are taken from Terry L. Brensinger, *Simile and Prophetic Language in the Old Testament* (Lewiston: Mellen Biblical Press, 1996), 1.

⁵² Koenen, “Süßes geht vom Starken aus,” 174, 197. Cf. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, 3.2.12: “metaphors must not be far-fetched, but we must give names to things that have none by deriving the metaphor from what is akin and of the same kind, so that, as soon as it is uttered, it is clearly seen to be akin” (§§1405a–1405b; trans. Freese, 358–59).

speaker (user) to clarify the meaning of the metaphor if it is unclear. But what happens when the user and receiver are not contemporaries—for example, if the user is an ancient and the receiver a modern? The user-context and the user's sign-context may be quite different—perhaps radically so—from the receiver-context and receiver's sign-context.⁵³ To again use “man is a wolf,” if it could be shown that metaphors likening individuals to wolves in modern, contemporary parlance in a particular culture were always and exclusively negative, whereas in the ancient culture originating the metaphor wolves were viewed positively or, at worst, ambiguously, there would be a significant interpretive problem: the ancient user's metaphor could potentially and irreparably be misunderstood by the modern receiver.⁵⁴ Both user and receiver, that is, must share knowledge of the subsidiary subject in general, as well as the “system of associated implications characteristic of the subsidiary subject.”⁵⁵ If they do not share such knowledge, then the full significance of the user's metaphor may be lost to (and on) the receiver.⁵⁶

This raises the issue of context yet again, but at an even more basic level, insofar as it regards the possible differences at work in the use and construction of an ancient metaphor and its contemporary reception and understanding(s).⁵⁷

⁵³ I.e., the user's and receiver's understandings of the subsidiary subject and its associations. See Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 58–75, 617–18, esp. 60: “The choice of the set of signs is determined by the context of the user which we may describe as the unbounded set of factors influencing him (user-context), and—if it is known—by the user's idea of the context of the receiver of the set of signs, which is limited and may therefore be described as a finite set of factors (presumed receiver-context)” (emphasis hers).

⁵⁴ Cf. Stephen J. Brown, *Image and Truth: Studies in the Imagery of the Bible* (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1955); 48: “It is clear that if the plant or animal so used be wholly unknown to the Reader, he will, as a rule, fail to appreciate the point of the underlying comparison.” Koenen, “Süßes geht vom Starken aus,” 174.

⁵⁵ See Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 41.

⁵⁶ This problem could also be the result of a natural assumption—often wrong—that a “user of a set of signs is choosing this particular set in conformity with rules known to us both” (Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 71). But this situation rarely obtains (Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 31; cf. also 250 n. 16).

⁵⁷ That is, this is a matter of situational context vs. verbal context. The situation-contextual problem need not be concerned with time distance. The problem could just as easily be synchronous as, e.g., in the case of translating a metaphor from one (contemporaneous but different) culture to another. Cf. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 50: “If it is true that our conceptual system largely depends on ‘families’ of metaphors, it is important to note that there may exist significant differences between one culture and another.” Still, it seems that the problem is compounded when the cultures are not only distinct but separated by large periods of time, language, and so forth (diachrony). Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 26 makes the point simply: “By their very definition, metaphors cannot possess ‘steno-meanings’, that is, meanings which are shared by a large number of people in exactly the same way.”

While this problem is a large one, it is not insurmountable.⁵⁸ It is, however, further complicated by the problem of “dead metaphors.” Dead metaphors are those which have been rigidified or conventionalized to such an extent—usually by overuse—that they no longer function metaphorically but have been reduced to mathematical-like equations.⁵⁹ The poetry of the metaphor, that is, has been flattened into prose.⁶⁰ In the modern context, this may be the very case with the metaphor studied in this work—the lion. In most instances, at least in North America, it seems that when someone is likened to a lion this indicates pride, nobility, or bravery.⁶¹ This is probably due to the fact that the lion is understood today as “the King of the Beasts,” despite marginal (and

⁵⁸ I.e., the interpretation of metaphor should not be limited to a comparative, diachronic (e.g., historical-critical) interpretive process, though that will be part of the method used in the present study. One can make sense of an ancient metaphor, that is, even if one does not understand or know the user-context or the user’s sign-context. Here the issue of literary context helps (see Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 230) and, regardless, metaphors are always subject to reinterpretation (ibid., 42–44, 52, 65–67). However, the sense made of a metaphor will undoubtedly be closer to the user’s sense if one shares some knowledge of the subsidiary and primary subjects. Still, it must be admitted that obtaining such knowledge is a difficult and typically provisional, incomplete process. Moreover, not all contemporary interpreters would see such a task as necessary. Nevertheless, for the ongoing significance of the original context, see Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 33, despite her observation that “[t]he constant reuse of images...makes it questionable to attribute such great authority to first use, as scholars of historical criticism normally do” (ibid., 67).

⁵⁹ Nietzsche was the first to make much of dead metaphors, which is how he defined truth: “truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they *are* illusions; worn-out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses” (cited in Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 40). See ibid., 74–75, and 618; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 25–27; and Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 50–53, for conventionalized metaphors that are “dead.” Lakoff and Johnson consider all metaphors to be “alive” as long as they continue to play a role in the conceptual system. Even so, metaphors that are “idiosyncratic, unsystematic, and isolated” and that “do not interact with other metaphors,” are not metaphors we live by. Hence, “[i]f any metaphorical expressions deserve to be called ‘dead,’ it is these, though they do have a bare spark of life” (*Metaphors We Live By*, 55). In Lakoff and Johnson’s view, even metaphors that are “dead” (fixed in a particular correspondence) can be “‘alive’ in the most fundamental sense: [if] they are metaphors we live by. The fact that they are conventionally fixed within the lexicon of English makes them no less alive” (ibid.). Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 50, points out that even a cliché “in a new situation can regain a figurative function.” Othmar Keel has pointed out to me (personal communication) that dead metaphors are, ironically, often the most effective.

⁶⁰ I am indebted to Walter Brueggemann, *Finally Comes the Poet: Daring Speech for Proclamation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 1–11 for this language.

⁶¹ See Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 44–45 for “Richard is a lion” meaning “Richard is brave.” Contrast her more nuanced description of the lion image on 524–43. One might also compare the motion picture, “Amistad,” in which the bravery of the main African character is evidenced by the fact that he killed a lion. Such notions are not restricted to recent days (note, e.g., “Richard the Lion-Hearted”), nor are they altogether absent from the cultures and literatures under investigation in this study.

non-canonical!) stories of cowardly lions.⁶² But does “bravery” capture the full tenor of the lion metaphor in ancient Israel? When God is likened to a lion in the Hebrew Bible, is it simply or only to highlight Yahweh’s bravery or nobility? Did Israel not already understand their God in such ways and use other metaphors thereby to describe Yahweh (for example, king, warrior)? Why, then, *an animal metaphor* and why *the lion* in particular? To press this point still further, the interpretation, “lion (metaphor) = bravery,” is tantamount to, if not worse than, the substitution view of metaphor, which has long been viewed as inadequate. The work of more recent metaphor theorists would indicate that to say “God is a lion” is not exactly the same as saying God is brave or noble or the like. If it were, why not simply say the latter instead of the former? On the contrary, to say “God is a lion” is to say much more, and the use of the metaphor raises a number of questions: exactly *how is God* like a lion? *which kind* of lion? *what aspects* or *behaviors* of God are like those of lions? and, in turn, *how are lions* like God? The problem of historical distance, if it can be called that, simply compounds the problem: do we know what the user meant by “lion” or thought of when using or hearing a leonine metaphor? In the case of the Hebrew Bible, for instance, while a few instances of leonine metaphor do support notions of bravery (e.g., Prov 28:1; Job 10:16) or nobility (e.g., Prov 30:30), and are perhaps the origin of our own dead metaphor, the vast majority do not carry such significance, though this does not mean that they are antithetical to such conceptions.

In sum, an adequate understanding of a metaphor (or, more broadly, an image) is greatly dependent on an adequate understanding of the user’s sign-context. Only by understanding the user’s sign-context, at least at some minimal level, can the receiver make sense of and appreciate the content or tenor of the metaphor in a way analogous to the user. This statement, however, must be unpacked: How does a (modern) receiver understand and appreciate a(n ancient) user’s metaphor and (by implication) sign-context?

Before turning to that question, a brief caveat must be made about simile: while some theorists have distinguished metaphor from simile, Aristotle was the first to argue that such a distinction was false.⁶³ Formally, simile and metaphor can be distinguished, but if Ricoeur is right that metaphor includes—

⁶² Indeed, the expectation (lion = brave) is what makes such stories humorous and unexpected. Note Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 224: “The more traditional the image, the more surprising is the effect of a-typical use and the easier it is for the author to exploit the hearers’ preconceptions and prejudices.” See the use of the lion in Isa 11:7; 65:25.

⁶³ Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 38, 616; cf. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, 3.4.1–3 (§§1406–1407; trans. Freese, 366–69): “The simile also is a metaphor; for there is very little difference. When the poet says of Achilles, he rushed on like a lion, it is a simile; if he says, ‘a lion, he rushed on,’ it is a metaphor; for because both are courageous, he transfers the sense and calls Achilles a lion....All such expressions may be used as similes or metaphors, so that all that are approved as metaphors will obviously also serve as similes which are metaphors without the details.”

even in the “tension” (interaction) view—the element of resemblance or comparison at a fundamental level, then they should not be distinguished too sharply. They are, therefore, “identical in a cognitive sense.”⁶⁴ Interestingly enough, even those who have argued strongly against considering simile and metaphor as identical concepts have also had to admit that one cannot draw too sharp of a distinction between the two.⁶⁵ For the purposes of this study, then, similes and metaphors are treated together and indistinguishably, though this is not to ignore the particular formal structures unique to each.⁶⁶

1.3. TEXTS, PICTURES, AND LIONS

To return to the earlier question: How does a modern receiver make sense of an ancient user’s metaphor, especially an animal metaphor used for God? Due to the open quality of metaphor, no one interpretive strategy will be entirely successful or complete in a final sort of way. Even so, the particular problem faced when receiving ancient metaphors in a contemporary context needs to be addressed in some fashion. As already indicated, there are a number of options one might choose in order to do so. The problem of dead metaphors, however, coupled with an interest of this study in the user-context and user’s sign-context, recommends an approach that takes seriously comparative and historical questions without neglecting literary and theological issues.

There have been a number of more or less cogent treatments of animal imagery in the Bible.⁶⁷ These studies have been variously focused: some treat

⁶⁴ Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 55 and n. 92; see also 74, 635.

⁶⁵ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 37 n. 16: “But no doubt the line between *some* metaphors and *some* similes is not a sharp one” (emphasis his). Cf. also his more nuanced statement regarding the comparative aspect of metaphor in “More about Metaphor,” 445–46, though he still draws some distinction between simile and metaphor.

⁶⁶ See Brensinger, *Simile and Prophetic Language*, 152–74 for a treatment of some of these structures. See also Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 56 and n. 96.

⁶⁷ See, e.g. (alphabetically), I. Aharoni, “Animals Mentioned in the Bible,” *Osiris* 5 (1938): 461–78; F. S. Bodenheimer, *Animal and Man in Bible Lands* (2 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960–1972); Colin Brown, “Animal,” *NIDNTT* 1:113–19; Jean Calvet and Marcel Cruppi, *Les animaux dans la littérature sacrée* (Paris: Fernand Lanore, 1956); Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, *The Symbolic Animals of Christianity* (London: Stuart & Watkins, 1970); Albert de Pury, *Homme et animal Dieu les créa: L’Ancien Testament et les animaux* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1993); Edwin Firmage, “Zoology,” *ABD* 6:1109–67; Tova Forti, “Animal Images in the Book of Proverbs,” *Bib* 77 (1996): 48–63; Marie Louise Henry, *Das Tier im religiösen Bewusstsein des alttestamentlichen Menschen* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1958), reprinted in Janowski, Neumann-Gorsolke, and Gleßner, *Gefährten und Feinde des Menschen*, 20–66; Hans Peter Pall, “Tiere im Alten Testament als Instrumente göttlichen Handelns” (Ph.D. diss., Wien, 1996); James Allen Rimbach, “Animal Imagery in the Old Testament: Some Aspects of Hebrew Poetics” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1972); Elijah Judah Schochet, *Animal Life in Jewish Tradition: Attitudes and Relationships* (New York: Ktav, 1984); C. H. Wallace, “Several Animals as Symbols in the Old Testament,” (Ph.D. diss., Basel, 1961); J. A. Wharton, “The Role of the Beast in the Old Testament: An Investigation of the Impact of the Animal World upon Old Testament Literature” (Ph.D. diss., Basel, 1968). On imagery

only the New Testament, others only the Old; most treat many animals, others only a few; some are concerned with certain sub-corpora of the Hebrew Bible, others are more sweeping in orientation. Each could be evaluated on the basis of its respective contributions, each critiqued according to its weaknesses. Here, it must suffice to say that a complete answer to the question of the meaning(s), content(s), and/or function(s) of theriomorphic imagery and metaphor for God in the biblical materials cannot be answered without an in-depth analysis of *each image*. Since this would be a herculean task, beyond the scope of one volume, it is best to focus on but one image. Given its prevalence throughout the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East, it would seem that one of Hercules' arch-rivals, the lion, is an ideal test case. What is gleaned from a thorough analysis of this one, frequently-attested image might then prove to be applicable—at least methodologically—to other animal images and, in turn, to theriomorphic imagery as a whole.

Despite the abundance of leonine symbolism in the Hebrew Bible, there has been a notable lack of studies devoted exclusively to its analysis. Even those studies that do exist remain largely, if not exclusively, concerned with textual and linguistic issues. The only book-length treatment on the subject, a dissertation by Michael Matthew Kaplan, is a case in point.⁶⁸ Though extremely helpful on a number of important matters, Kaplan's study suffers from several deficiencies:

- 1) Over half of Kaplan's work is devoted to a philological analysis of the Hebrew words for lion. By the time Kaplan gets to metaphorical uses of the lion image, he only has space to offer a "random sample" of what he calls "the punitive lion passages." This sample involves a treatment of only six passages from the Hebrew Bible (1 Kgs 13:1-32, 20:35-43; 2 Kgs 17:24-41; Hos 5:13-14, 13:1-8; and Jer 5:1-6). As will be seen in Chapter 2, such a sample barely scratches the surface of the biblical material and thus cannot hope to do it justice.
- 2) Not only are numerous instances of leonine metaphors not discussed, Kaplan excludes *a priori* any treatment of non-metaphorical, naturalistic presentations of lions. This eliminates an important resource for accessing and understanding the user-context and user's sign-context, and thus the system of associations accompanying the subsidiary subject of the metaphor.
- 3) While crafted as a comparative treatment, Kaplan's work largely confines the ancient Near Eastern textual material to

in general, see Brown, *Image and Truth*; G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); and J. C. L. Gibson, *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998).

⁶⁸ Michael Matthew Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible: A Study of a Biblical Metaphor" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981).

the lexical level and relegates ancient Near Eastern art to a few footnotes.⁶⁹

- 4) Lastly, given its concern with philological and historical issues, Kaplan's work contributes only little to an understanding of the function or content of leonine imagery as a whole, especially as it focuses exclusively on metaphors where the lion is a punitive tool.

In short, while Kaplan's work is quite helpful, even foundational, on the philological level,⁷⁰ the theological and literary significance of leonine symbolism is largely neglected or passed over with but brief comment. Similar criticisms would hold for G. Johannes Botterweck's work on the lion in the Hebrew Bible, which has proved exceedingly influential in subsequent lexical treatments.⁷¹

Metaphor theory indicates that some of the problems evident in previous research are actually worse than they at first appear. To cite but one example, the issue of context at all its levels (word, sentence, discourse, culture) is not thoroughly addressed in previous research on leonine imagery and metaphor. Either all of the tools available to access the user-context are not engaged or the user-context is stressed to the neglect of the semantic context or, more commonly, both. Hence, to ensure that the weaknesses found in previous research are avoided, several methodological points must be stressed:

First, the biblical material must be engaged *comprehensively*, not by means of a small sample. While the various instances of leonine imagery and metaphor in the Bible can and should be typed, this ought to be done only after one has surveyed the entire landscape. To put it another way: the typology developed should include all exemplars.⁷²

Second, to counteract the problem of dead or rigidified metaphors overly impacting or adversely affecting the interpretation of leonine metaphors, close attention must be paid to *the ancient context*—in all of its manifestations, using all of the resources currently available.⁷³ To be precise, previous biblical research has suffered from a general lack of attention to non-textual types of

⁶⁹ See, *ibid.*, 17 and 199 n. 40. No figures are included in the work. For Near Eastern texts, Kaplan usually cites only treaty documents (see, e.g., 16 and 198 n. 39).

⁷⁰ See Appendix 1: Terminology for "Lion" in the Hebrew Bible.

⁷¹ G. Johannes Botterweck, "Gott und Mensch in den alttestamentlichen Löwenbildern," in *Wort, Leid und Gottesspruch: Festschrift für Joseph Ziegler* (ed. Josef Schreiner; 2 vols.; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1972), 2:117–28; and *idem*, "אַרִי *ārī*; אַרְיָה *ārīyāh*; גֹּר *gūr*; כֶּפִּיר *kephīr*; לִבְיָא *lībhi*; לַיִשׁ *layish*; שָׁחַל *shachal*," *TDOT* 1:374–88. See further Appendix 1 and note Robert C. Stallman, "אַרִי," *NIDOTTE* 1:513–17 for an example of Botterweck's influence.

⁷² See Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree*, 66.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 66 (cf. 223) would term such an endeavor paying attention to the image's history; this includes not only the literary placement or historical situation of the image, but also "a reasonable knowledge of the notions that are associated in the given culture with the image analyzed. If this is neglected, one risks interpreting the image in the light of one's own preconceptions." Even so, she goes on to stress the provisional nature of this knowledge (67).

data.⁷⁴ This inattention is a significant problem for several reasons, not the least of which is the probability that ancient literacy rates were probably very low.⁷⁵ The scholarly tendency—at least in biblical studies—to focus exclusively on texts has only recently begun to change, especially under the influence of the work on iconography and the Hebrew Bible initiated by the members of the “Fribourg School.”⁷⁶ But the significance of “visual piety” or “material religion” has also been increasingly noted and valued among researchers of contemporary religious experience and communities.⁷⁷ In short,

⁷⁴ This holds true not only for previous research on the lion, but for image-analysis in the biblical material in general. Note, e.g., Korpel’s failure to incorporate iconography in her treatment. This is due, no doubt, to the reasons she specifies (*A Rift in the Clouds*, 80 n. 166) as well as her view (which I do not share, and certainly not for all cultures) that “[i]t is self-evident that in the case of ‘dead’ civilizations the language is our most precious point of access to the distinctive ideas of a people” (81).

⁷⁵ This point has been debated. See, e.g., the work of Alan R. Millard (“The Practice of Writing in Ancient Israel,” *BA* 35 [1972]: 98–111; idem, “An Assessment of the Evidence for Writing in Ancient Israel,” in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985], 301–12; idem, “The Knowledge of Writing in Iron Age Palestine,” in *“Lasset uns Brücken bauen...”: Collected Communications of the XVth Congress of the Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Cambridge 1995* [ed. Klaus-Dietrich Schunck and Matthias Augustin; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1998], 33–39), who has argued that writing was prevalent in Iron Age Israel vs. the recent work of Ian M. Young (“Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence [Parts I and II],” *VT* 48 [1998]: 239–53, 408–22), who has argued the opposite conclusion. Even if Millard is right about the prevalence or familiarity of writing in Iron Age Palestine, however, this does not prove that *all people* could *understand* or *read* such writing. (And this does not even raise the issue that the argument is largely one from silence.) Of course, the issue of understanding an iconographic image may be no less complicated, but it certainly does not require the same type of linguistic and lexical knowledge to “read”—at least at a rudimentary level. On literacy in antiquity, see also Herman Vanstiphout, “Memory and Literacy in Ancient Western Asia,” *CANE* 4:2181–96, esp. 2187–90; and note also Michael D. Coogan, “Literacy and the Formation of Biblical Literature,” in *Realia Dei: Essays in Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Edward F. Campbell, Jr. at His Retirement* (ed. Prescott H. Williams, Jr. and Theodore Hiebert; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 47–61; and Aaron Demsky, “Literacy,” in *OEANE* 3:362–69.

⁷⁶ Especially Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger. The works by Keel are too numerous to list here (see the Bibliography), but two must be mentioned: *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997; German original: 1972; 5th German edition: 1996); and Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998; German original: 1992).

⁷⁷ See David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); and Nadine Pence Frantz, “Material Culture, Understanding, and Meaning: Writing and Picturing,” *JAAR* 66 (1998): 791–815. For a fascinating treatment of ancient Christian material culture with respect to the visual arts, see Paul Corby Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

sense—even and perhaps especially metaphorical sense—is constructed and it is not made only in the literary or textual realms.⁷⁸ Hence, material culture must be taken seriously as an important indicator and repository of the user-context as well as a witness to the user's sign-context. That material culture includes *both* texts and images (iconography).⁷⁹ In paying particular attention to the latter, perhaps biblical studies—like religious studies in general—can “come to its senses.”⁸⁰

Third, recent developments in *image analysis* and *metaphor theory*, such as those outlined above, should enter into and inform the interpretive process.

There are still other tools that will prove useful: one thinks especially of anthropological and zoological research pertinent to the lion.⁸¹ In the present study, these disciplines are drawn on selectively and where pertinent.

⁷⁸ Note Frantz, “Material Culture, Understanding, and Meaning,” 795: “This way of understanding the mutually interactive process of material culture and conceptualization challenges us to think of artifacts and other evidence of the physicality of a culture as vital, interpretive pieces which we must understand in order to understand that culture. This is especially necessary in the cases where material forms other than text and writing have been the negotiating mediums for conceptualization, but it is also necessary in cases where texts are more widely present. Not only can other forms of material culture be used to corroborate or refute a conclusion reached through the examination of a text, but textual scholars must also be attentive to the materiality of the writing itself. We limit the language and conceptualization process of any culture when we assume that it consists only of the written word and that it is possible to have an unproblematic recovery of that word.”

⁷⁹ The interpretation of texts must also be material as writing is no less material than picturing (see Frantz, “Material Culture, Understanding, and Meaning,” 791–815). Ancient Near Eastern (and biblical) texts will therefore be drawn on in interpreting ancient Near Eastern (or Israelite) artifacts and vice versa. In this way I hope to limit and control my impact and the impact of my context (receiver sign-context) as a contemporary interpreter of the imagery. Even so, it should again be noted that this procedure is not the only way to interpret, nor do I wish to limit interpretation to the diachronic, historical, and comparative realms. There are, after all, other “worlds” involved in interpretation. See further Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (2d ed.; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999); and Frantz, “Material Culture, Understanding, and Meaning,” 791–815, who lists Master Cultural Narratives, Historical Recovery, Formal Theories of Aesthetics and Meaning, and Viewer/Reader Response. See also Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 62 who raises the problem of arbitrary reconstructions of the presumed user-context and therefore the possibility—sometimes quite likely—that our interpretation “may happen to be wrong.”

⁸⁰ Cf. Lawrence E. Sullivan, “Coming to Our Senses: Religious Studies in the Academy,” *JAAR* 66 (1998): 1–11, esp. 6–8.

⁸¹ For anthropology, see the fascinating treatment of the bull in Michael Rice, *The Power of the Bull* (London: Routledge, 1998) as well as the recent volume devoted to felines: Nicholas J. Saunders, ed., *Icons of Power: Feline Symbolism in the Americas* (London: Routledge, 1998). In zoology, the seminal study, still unsurpassed, is that of George B. Schaller, who produced the most extensive field study of lions yet attempted (*The Serengeti Lion: A Study of Predator-Prey Relations* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1972]).

1.4. PLAN OF THE PRESENT STUDY

It remains to overview briefly the plan of the present study and how it incorporates the various items addressed above. Chapter 2 is an overview of all the texts in the Hebrew Bible that mention or evoke leonine imagery.⁸² The texts are typed according to categories, the broadest of which is the “naturalistic” vs. the “metaphorical.” These two categories are then further subdivided; for example: positive metaphorical usage for the self or the righteous vs. negative metaphorical usage for the enemy or the wicked; metaphorical application to the monarch/mighty one or to God; information relating to the lion’s habitat, prey, or predation derivable from naturalistic contexts; and so forth. This chapter treats the entirety of the biblical material more or less synchronously and demonstrates that the lion as the subsidiary subject in a metaphorical construction orbits around four primary referents: the self/righteous, the enemy/wicked, the monarch/mighty one, and the Deity.

Chapter 3 turns to the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine to see how it might enlighten, corroborate and support, or nuance and refine the information derived from the Hebrew Bible itself. After surveying the material remains from Late Bronze I-II (1500-1200) to Iron Age III/Persian Period (586-332), the chapter concludes with three significant observations: 1) lion artifacts are often found with apparent cultic and religious significance; 2) they are typically found in cultic and official assemblages; and 3) the artistic composition, style, and design of these artifacts almost always reflects outside influence, especially from southern (Egypt) and northern (Phoenicia, Syria, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia) locales.

The artistic connections of the artifacts surveyed in Chapter 3 raise the comparative question: If Israel borrowed from its neighbors in the artistic style of its lion images, might it also have borrowed more broadly from its neighbors in the construction of its lion metaphors? Chapter 4 addresses this question, examining leonine imagery in the art and literature of the ancient Near East. Such imagery is found in numerous literary contexts—divine, royal, even geographical—and thus a rich database for comparative analysis is available. This textual analysis is complemented and supplemented by paying attention to the lion in ancient Near Eastern iconography. In both cases, that of art and text, the material is not presented according to regions or iconographical “dialects,” but is instead categorized according to rubric or function—that is, the meaning as interpreted from the imagery itself (for example, the lion as enemy and threat to order, the lion as monarch/mighty one and victor, the lion and the gods, and so forth). This is not because diachronic or regional distinctives are unimportant (these are noted as often as possible) but is the practical result of the sheer amount of lion imagery found throughout the various ancient Near Eastern cultures. The ubiquity of the lion image, therefore, requires

⁸² The former are identified by the appearance of one of the lion terms (see Appendix 1; the texts containing such are collected in Appendix 3); the latter must be identified by the presence of leonine characteristics or semantic elements (see Appendix 2).

delimitation and categorization, especially in the light of the focus of this particular study.⁸³

Chapter 5 puts the data culled from the comparative contexts into dialogue with the material from the Hebrew Bible and the archaeology of ancient Israel/Palestine. The main referents in the metaphorical typology set up in Chapter 2 are investigated further in this light, especially with regard to questions concerning the possible origins, dependencies, influences, similarities, differences, and variations of the lion image in the Hebrew Bible. The most important result of this pursuit is to shed light on the various functions, significances, and meanings of the lion as image and metaphor.

Chapter 6 summarizes and concludes the study, drawing out some of its many implications, especially for theology, the rendering or figuring of God, and—to come full-circle—God-language. By the end, it should be clear that zoomorphic images like that of the lion contain nuances that are often not available or appropriate in anthropomorphic and anthropocentric God-talk. I hope, finally, that a more adequate understanding of leonine image and metaphor in ancient Israel may contribute to a more adequate understanding of Israel's God. After all, "What is stronger than a lion?" (Judg 14:18).

⁸³ For more on the method adopted here, see Chapter 4 (§4.1). Cf. also J.-G. Heintz, "Royal Traits and Messianic Figures: A Thematic and Iconographical Approach," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity: The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins* (ed. James H. Charlesworth et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 52–66, esp. 52–53. Heintz wants to avoid an iconographical approach that is merely illustrative of phraseology related to the particular issue under investigation. Instead, he advocates a "more explanatory perspective," attempting "to isolate the constitutive elements of the best-characterized messianic representations." Ideally, such an approach would include "a specific study of each monument decorated with figures in its historical and artistic context (synchronic), then a subsequent elaboration of a comprehensive dossier on the theme (and/or the motifs) represented (diachronic), with the view of reconstituting the total iconic syntax and coherence." Practically, however, he must settle for something of a synthesis of these two steps and the same is true for the present study. Even such an abbreviated approach has the merit of avoiding "iconographical blindness" as "it is evident that the biblical exegete cannot cut himself off from such sources of information without loss" (*ibid.*, 53 and 54, respectively).

PART I

Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel/Palestine

Chapter 2

“The Lion Has Roared, Who Is Not Afraid?” (Amos 3:8): The Lion in the Hebrew Bible

“There is a narrow sense of understanding a language in which one may be said to understand a language when he knows the grammar, the literal meanings of all the terms, and even the meaning of the idioms. Such knowledge *does not suffice for the understanding of the metaphors of the language*. In addition one must know something of the linguistic conventions...and even of minor facets of the general culture, such as what characteristics of bears are uppermost in people’s minds.”¹

“The reader of the metaphorical expression ‘man is a wolf’ should know *the system of associated commonplaces* belonging to the word ‘wolf.’”²

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 demonstrated the importance of, and need for, an in-depth probe of animal imagery in general, and of lion imagery in particular. If the specific goal of this work—an understanding of the meaning(s) and function(s) of leonine imagery and metaphor in the Hebrew Bible—is to be reached, then a survey of the entire range of biblical lion imagery is necessary. Additional considerations could be mentioned in support of such an endeavor, not the least of which is that literary competence—in this case, an adequate knowledge of one aspect of Israelite literature and religion—requires more than linguistic ability. It requires knowledge of “even minor facets” (Henle) of the original culture, as these are especially important for understanding such a culture’s metaphors. The “characteristics of bears”—or in this work, of lions—are certainly among the minor facets critical to the interpretation of animal metaphors.

In the case of the Hebrew Bible, however, the lion is not as minor as it might, at first, seem.³ Indeed, the lion is explicitly mentioned in the Hebrew

¹ Paul Henle, “Metaphor,” in *Language, Thought, Culture* (ed. Paul Henle; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), 185–86 (emphasis mine).

² Marjo Christina Annette Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (UBL 8; Münster: UGARIT-Verlag, 1990), 46 (emphasis hers).

³ Cf. Silvia Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder: Nachrichten von darstellender Kunst im Alten Testament* (OBO 74; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1987), 76: “Von allen wildlebenden Tiere hat wohl keines die Menschen im Palästina der biblischen Zeit so geängstigt und zugleich fasziniert wie der Löwe, für den die hebräische Sprache nicht weniger als sieben Wörter hat und von dem zumeist in metaphorischen Kontexten die Rede ist.”

Bible over one hundred and fifty times (see Appendix 3). This number does not include other passages where lion imagery is evoked or implied without any mention of the primary Hebrew words for “lion” (see Appendix 2). All told, well over two hundred verses explicitly use or implicitly evoke leonine imagery.

This is an extremely high number of occurrences; indeed, of the wild animals discussed in the Hebrew Bible, the lion is among the most, if not *the* most, frequently mentioned.⁴ Of the animals to which Yahweh is likened, the lion is by far the favorite.⁵ This high attestation of lion imagery leads to at least two conclusions:

- 1) Such imagery was popular in ancient Israel, at least at various times,⁶ and this is consonant with the broad popularity of the lion in the ancient Near East; and
- 2) The sheer number of texts that evoke or discuss the lion prevents an exhaustive analysis of every passage; the database is simply too large and unwieldy.

The latter point means that selectivity is in order, especially for the purposes of comparative analysis.⁷ Even so, the discussion of metaphor theory in Chapter 1 dictates that the database should not be limited too quickly. To eliminate from consideration, for instance, naturalistic instances of lion imagery and focus exclusively on metaphorical instances is a serious mistake: it removes data critical for understanding the user-context and user’s sign-context and thus significantly undermines the ability of the receiver to make adequate sense of the metaphor.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to overview and selectively examine the entirety of lion imagery and metaphor in the Hebrew Bible. It will be shown that:

- the lion is an *ubiquitous symbol*, occurring across various genres and in varying contexts;⁸ and
- the lion is a *polyvalent symbol*, associated with a large variety of referents and carrying a number of connotations,

⁴ Cf. A. E. Shipley, S. A. Cook, and T. K. Cheyne, “Lion,” in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (ed. T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black; New York: MacMillan, 1902), 3:2802; and Philip J. King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah—An Archaeological Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 129.

⁵ Cf. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 532.

⁶ This chapter treats the biblical material in synchronic fashion. Diachronic concerns are more to the fore in Chapters 3–5.

⁷ Cf. Michael Matthew Kaplan’s sample of “punitive lion passages” (“The Lion in the Hebrew Bible: A Study of a Biblical Metaphor” [Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981], 115–79).

⁸ For genre distributions see Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 31–32, 44–45, 75–76, 93–94, 99, 112–13.

all of which, however, seem to be dependent on the primary aspects of *threat* and *power*.

It is, in short, the threat posed by the lion that permits it to function as a polyvalent subject in its various presentations in the Hebrew Bible. Each of these presentations will be examined, but the first task is to class or type the various instances so as to produce a taxonomy of leonine imagery. This is and must remain an imprecise task as many passages can (and will) be considered in more than one category. Even so, some broad distinctions, at least for heuristic purposes, can be drawn. The first and broadest of these is the categorization of passages into those that employ the lion image in naturalistic or metaphorical ways.

2.2. NATURALISTIC USAGES

Chapter 1 demonstrated that an adequate understanding and interpretation of the tenor of a metaphor depends at least to some extent on an adequate knowledge of the metaphor's principal and subsidiary subjects—especially according to the user-context and user's sign-context. One way to cast light on these subjects is by paying attention to the textual statements that utilize the subsidiary subject in non-metaphorical fashion.⁹ Such statements provide an *entrée* into what the user imag(in)ed when employing the subsidiary subject in a metaphorical construction. As Westermann states: “[I]n animal similes/metaphors it is a question of *real* animals; otherwise the comparison would lose its point.”¹⁰

Knowledge of the naturalistic use of the lion in the Hebrew Bible is therefore critical for any responsible understanding of its metaphorical use. Much data regarding leonine habits, behavior, and so forth, as well as human perception of such in antiquity can be gleaned from instances where actual, “real” lions are referred to in naturalistic ways.¹¹ Additional information bearing on naturalistic presentations of lions in antiquity is available from other sources as well, for example, comparative analysis of contiguous cultures (see Chapter 4) or contemporary zoological research. At this point, however, the primary concern is to identify the main characteristics of real lions that are described in the Hebrew Bible.

Unfortunately, even this apparently simple task is complicated by the fact that there are few purely naturalistic presentations of lions in the Hebrew

⁹ Another way is by paying attention to images. See further Chapters 3–4.

¹⁰ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37–50: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 228 (emphasis mine).

¹¹ A metaphorical lion is certainly no less “real”—especially on the textual level—than an actual one. Nevertheless, I will employ the term “real lion(s)” when speaking of naturalistic, non-metaphorical lions or presentations thereof.

Bible.¹² That is, even those passages that seem to describe the behavior of real lions may often be employed in the service of a larger literary and/or theological point. If so, this would mean that the lion in such instances is functioning, at least obliquely, as a symbol, if not as a metaphor proper. The lions in Judges 14, 1 Samuel 17, 1 Kings 13, and Daniel 6, for instance, can be understood as real lions, but can just as easily be understood as symbolic or figurative in nature (see below). One must admit, therefore, that even the reference that seems, on the face of it, exclusively naturalistic *in presentation* might be symbolic or metaphorical *in function*. The converse is also true: even highly developed metaphorical instances of lion imagery often contain naturalistic information. Yet despite the “cross-fertilization” of the naturalistic and metaphorical, there are still a number of important insights that can be gleaned from what appear to be, in the main, naturalistic presentations—passages where the lion is not correlated with a referent in an overtly metaphorical way.¹³ Before these texts are examined, a few general observations should be made.

2.2.1. General Observations on the Lion in Ancient Israel/Palestine

2.2.1.1. *Existence, Extinction, and Species.* The large number of passages mentioning or evoking the lion leads to another conclusion not listed above, namely that lions were prevalent in ancient Israel/Palestine. This has been the assumption of most scholars,¹⁴ though others have demurred. Several factors indicate that the former group is correct and that the lion was not an unknown or infrequently encountered animal in ancient Israel/Palestine.

¹² Cf. R. K. Harrison, “Lion,” *ISBE* 3:142: “Nearly all the references to the lion are figurative.” Othmar Keel, Max Küchler, and Christoph Uehlinger, *Orte und Landschaften der Bibel*, Volume 1: *Geographisch-geschichtliche Landeskunde* (Zurich: Benziger, 1984), 143: “Von den rund 135 Stellen reden aber nur etwa 25 von wirklichen Löwen.” The numbers are low on both counts.

¹³ For the purposes of this study the following passages are treated as naturalistic: Judg 14:5, 8, 9, 18 (?); 1 Sam 17:34, 36, 37; 2 Sam 23:20; 1 Kgs 13:24, 25, 26, 28, 36; 2 Kgs 17:25, 26; Isa 15:9 (?); Isa 30:6; Jer 5:6 (?); Amos 3:4, 8 (?), 12, 5:19; Zech 11:3 (?); Ps 104:21; Job 28:8 (?), 38:39; Prov 22:13, 26:13, 30:30; Song 4:8; Eccl 9:4; Lam 4:3; Dan 6:8, 13, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25, 28; 1 Chr 11:22. Additional passages that evoke lion imagery (see Appendix 2) and that are also treated as naturalistic are Gen 37:33, 44:28; Exod 22:12; Judg 14:14 (?); 1 Sam 17:35; Jer 12:5; Ps 104:22; Job 38:40. In light of the discussion above, the question marks following some of the texts could be applied to virtually all of them.

¹⁴ Note, e.g., Paula Wapnish, “Lions,” *OEANE* 3:361: “If artistic and literary evidence are any guide, lions were known all over the ancient Near East”; G. E. Post, “Lion,” in *A Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. James Hastings; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988 [orig: 1899–1904]), 3:126; Shipley, Cook, and Cheyne, “Lion,” 3:2802 (highlighting the similes); W. S. McCullough and F. S. Bodenheimer, “Lion,” *IDB* 3:136; Ludwig Köhler, *Hebrew Man* (New York: Abingdon, 1956), 82; August Wünsche, *Die Bildersprache des Alten Testaments: Ein Beitrag zur ästhetischen Würdigung des poetischen Schrifttums im Alten Testament* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1906), 57; and J.-G. Heintz, “Löwe,” *NBL* 2:656.

First, beyond the extensive witness of lion imagery and metaphor in the Hebrew Bible, the fossil record of ancient Israel/Palestine should be considered. Lions first appear there in the Late Pleistocene period.¹⁵ Lion bones have also been recovered at several archaeological sites from much later, historical periods: Jaffa (12th century), Tel Miqne/Ekron (Iron I and Iron II), and Tel Dan (Iron I and mid-9th century) among others.¹⁶ Second, the archaeological record of Israel/Palestine has produced a number of artifacts throughout various periods that attest to the lion's popularity as an artistic and decorative motif.¹⁷ Third, lions were known to inhabit the region in modern times. Unfortunately, first-hand reports are few and secondary assessments based on them are conflicted. Early twentieth-century dictionary articles typically cite Reland who recounted that lions were found in Palestine as late as the end of the 12th century CE.¹⁸ Other scholars rely on the account of the Muslim knight Usamah ibn Munqidh (also 12th century CE) who said he fought and killed lions in the Orontes valley.¹⁹ Evidence for the lion's existence in the centuries after the twelfth is less clear, with scholars debating the exact date of the lion's extinction in the ancient Near East. Some state that the lion disappeared in Palestine as early as the 13th century CE,²⁰ while others believe that it survived there until the 19th century CE.²¹ Of course, the lion may well have survived longer in other parts of Mesopotamia and Syria—perhaps even

¹⁵ Wapnish, "Lions," 3:361–62. While Wapnish is not explicit, she is probably referring to the late Paleolithic period or ca. 25,000–10,000. See further Allan S. Gilbert, "The Flora and Fauna of the Ancient Near East," *CANE* 1:167, 169, who lists the lion (*Panthera leo*) among the indigenous mammalian fauna of the postglacial Near East.

¹⁶ See Wapnish, "Lions," 3:361–62; Edwin Firmage, "Zoology," *ABD* 6:1143; and L. Martin, "The Faunal Remains from Tell es-Sabidiyeh," *Levant* 20 (1988): 83–84. See further Paula Wapnish and Brian Hesse, "Faunal Remains from Tel Dan: Perspectives on Animal Production at a Village, Urban and Ritual Center," *Archaeozoologia* 4 (1991): 9–86; and Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira, 1998), 199–200, 226–27. Wapnish, "Lions," 3:361–62 also mentions lion bones from ʿEsban (Roman period), Habuba-Kabira in northern Syria (4th millennium and Middle Bronze Age), Lidar Höyük in Anatolia (Late Bronze Age and Hellenistic period), and Umm el-Qaab in Egypt (early 3rd millennium).

¹⁷ These materials, as well as those relating to the fossil record, are treated more extensively in Chapter 3. See also **Map 3.1**.

¹⁸ See Post, "Lion," 3:126; Shipley, Cook, and Cheyne, "Lion," 3:2803.

¹⁹ McCullough and Bodenheimer, "Lion," 3:136. Cf. George Foot Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), 473, 376 and n. 1, who also mentions intrusions of lions in Baghdad in 1205 and 1217 CE (473).

²⁰ Menashe Har-El, "The Pride of the Jordan: The Jungle of the Jordan," *BA* 41 (1978): 72. Harrison, "Lion," 3:141 also advocates a 13th century CE date for extinction in Palestine. Cf. McCullough and Bodenheimer, "Lion," 3:136: "They decreased until shortly after A.D. 1300. The last two reported lions were killed near Beisan (Beth-shan) and near Megiddo."

²¹ Wapnish, "Lions," 3:361.

into the 20th century CE,²² though some scholars believe that they became extinct there at some point in the 19th century CE.²³ It might be noted, however, that a small group—indeed, the last of its kind—of Asiatic lions continues to survive in the Gir forest in India.²⁴

Unfortunately, scholars seldom cite the sources they use to determine their dates of extinction and often appear to rely on one another. Happily, the exact date of the extinction of the lion in the Near East is relatively unimportant to the present task.²⁵ Instead, it can suffice to say that the data supports the conclusion that the lion belonged to the fauna of the ancient Near East, including that of the Levant proper—especially in ancient times—even though it is now locally extinct.²⁶

But *which* species of lion inhabited these areas? Of the various subspecies of lion (*Felis leo*), the African lion (*Panthera leo*) is most familiar to moderns (see **fig. 2.1**). But in antiquity, the Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*, also known as *Panthera leo persica*, Meyer; cf. **figs. 2.2-3**) was also prevalent, especially in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Mesopotamia, and northwest India.²⁷

²² Harrison, "Lion," 3:141; Wapnish, "Lions," 3:361. In his article, published in Hastings' *A Dictionary of the Bible* (1899–1904), G. E. Post was still able to write: "They are met with even now in Mesopotamia" ("Lion," 3:126). Similarly, Shipley, Cook, and Cheyne (in 1902): "still met with in the jungles of the Euphrates and the Tigris" ("Lion," 3:2803). J. N. Postgate, writing in 1992, implies the continued existence of lions in the alluvial plain between the Tigris and Euphrates (see his *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* [London: Routledge, 1992], 15). Keel, Küchler, Uehlinger, *Orte und Landschaften*, 143 state that the lion survived in Syria into the 19th century and became extinct in Iraq ca. 1920 and in Iran ca. 1930. "Asiatic Lion: *Panthera leo persica* (Meyer, 1826)" [article on-line]; available from <http://lynx.uio.no/cattfolk/asaleo02.htm> [through <http://lynx.uio.no/cattfolk/asaleo07.htm>; and <http://lynx.uio.no/cattfolk/asaleofl.htm>]; Internet; accessed 1 November 1999 and 19 June 2000; n. p. states that "the last reports from Iran and Iraq date to 1942...and 1918...respectively." See, more recently, Margaret Cool Root, "Animals in the Art of Ancient Iran," in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Billie Jean Collins; HdO 64; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 172: "The last recorded sighting of the lion in Iran was in 1942...although there are reports of a dead one seen in 1962."

²³ Jehuda Feliks, "Lion," *EncJud* 11:275. Layard reported seeing them in Khuzistan in the mid-19th century (see Shipley, Cook, and Cheyne, "The Lion," 3:2803 n. 2). McCullough and Bodenheimer, "Lion," 3:136 advocate a date "only toward the end of the nineteenth century."

²⁴ "Asiatic Lion," n. p.

²⁵ Cf. the work of Aristogeiton Marcus Soho, "Did the Lion Exist in Greece within Historic Times?" (Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1898) for the lion in Greece. Also Harrison, "Lion," 3:141: "Lions had ceased to inhabit Greece by ca. A.D. 100." Similarly, "Asiatic Lion," n. p.

²⁶ Gilbert, "The Flora and Fauna of the Ancient Near East," 1:167, 169; idem, "The Native Fauna of the Ancient Near East," in Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East*, 27–28, 54, 58.

²⁷ Harrison, "Lion," 3:141; McCullough and Bodenheimer, "Lion," 3:136. Gilbert, "The Flora and Fauna," 1:167, 169, identifies the range of *Panthera leo* in the ancient Near East as the "[o]pen terrain of southwest Asia, India, and North Africa." Elsewhere, he

Although some scholars claim that the Asiatic lion is slightly smaller than the African subspecies, the statistics do not support this.²⁸ It has been customary to differentiate the two types of lion on the basis of the length, color, and extent of the male's mane, with the African lion having the longer, darker, and thicker coat. The mane of the Asiatic subspecies, it was believed, stopped at the shoulders but continued underneath the animal, covering much of the belly area.²⁹ But this differential has been challenged by some scholars and it now seems that little can be said regarding the differences between the two subspecies on the basis of the manes alone, as there is considerable variation in both.³⁰ Indeed, while some have made much of the African/Asiatic distinction, notably Koehler,³¹ it is best not to speculate on which type of lion was encountered and where. As Wapnish notes: "Several subspecies of lion ranged throughout the greater Near East until modern times, but it is impossible to determine which were closest to ancient Levantine populations."³² (See **Map 2.1** for the distribution of the lion in North Africa and Southwest Asia.) Hence, all that can be confidently asserted is that biblical Hebrew employs several different terms to refer to the lion. While it may be the case that these terms once referred to different kinds and types of lions, perhaps even to different subspecies, this can—in the main—no longer be known for certain (see Appendix 1).³³

gives the range of *Panthera leo persica* as the "[o]pen terrain of SW Asia, India" ("The Native Fauna," 54).

²⁸ "Asiatic Lion," n. p.: "adult Gir males weigh 160–190 kg...while females weigh 110–120 kg....The record total length of a male Asiatic lion (including the tail) is 2.92 m." This is quite comparable to the measurements of adult male African lions, which Schaller gives as 150–189 kg and 2.46–2.84 m (George B. Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion: A Study in Predator-Prey Relations* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1972], 30).

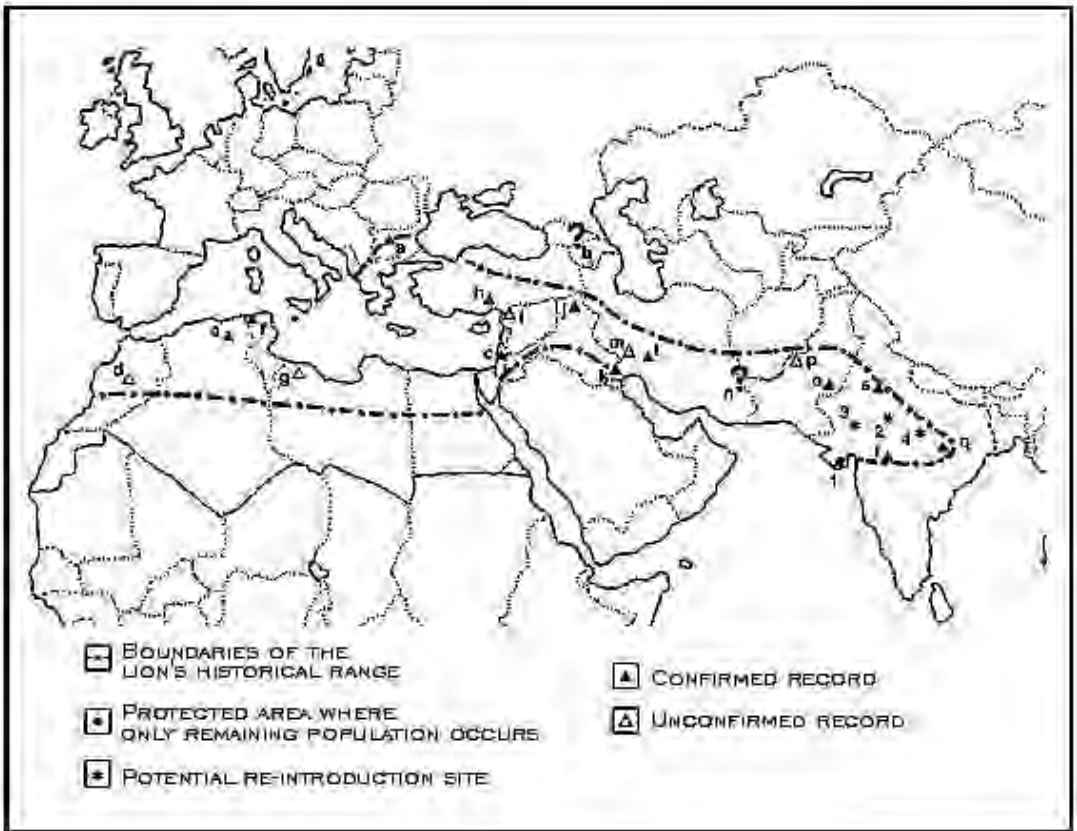
²⁹ John W. Klotz, "The Lion and the Unicorn," *Concordia Journal* 5 (1979): 213 who says, however, that the Persian lion was "heavily maned." Cf. McCullough and Bodenheimer, "Lion," 3:136.

³⁰ See McCullough and Bodenheimer, "Lion," 3:136; F. S. Bodenheimer, *Animal and Man in Bible Lands* (2 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960–1972), 1:42 n. Cf., however, "Asiatic Lion," n. p. for some differences (especially genetic) between Asiatic and African lions. There may also be some social differences between the two subspecies: the mean pride size seems to be slightly smaller in Gir lions than in the sub-Saharan African lions, Gir males have less contact with the pride, and so forth (*ibid.*).

³¹ Ludwig Koehler, "Lexikologisch-Geographisches," *ZDPV* 62 (1939): 115–25. See the discussion in Appendix 1. The data presented there is further evidence that Koehler's precise distinctions cannot be maintained.

³² Wapnish, "Lions," 3:361; but note that "Asiatic Lion," n. p. points out that there "appears to be no record of contiguous populations of the two subspecies [at least] in historic times."

³³ Cf. Wapnish's general criticism on this point: "few philologists have understood modern zoological classification well enough to use it effectively: many times a term is equated with a modern species when there is insufficient evidence to make such a judgment, or when the folk category is, in fact, closer to a higher-level scientific grouping. In most cases, there has been little recognition that the ancients had no concept of Linnaean



Map 2.1. Distribution of the Lion in North Africa and Southwest Asia.

2.2.1.2. Number, Gender, and Other Specifics. The existence of several distinct terms for the lion leads to further conclusions regarding the depiction of the lion in the Hebrew Bible. Many of these are almost too obvious to mention, but nevertheless reveal several important things about the lion in ancient Israel, or at least the conceptions thereof preserved in the Hebrew Bible. For instance, the existence of different terms for lions betrays a more extensive acquaintance with and knowledge of leonine traits on a general, popular level than what is presently the case.³⁴ Such knowledge may even be reflected in the Kethib/Qere

categories" ("Ethnozoology," *OEANE* 2:285). For animal taxonomy in the Hebrew Bible, see also Richard Whitekettle, "Where the Wild Things Are: Primary Level Taxa in Israelite Zoological Thought," *JSOT* 93 (2001): 17–37.

³⁴ Note, e.g., the sentiments in Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 241: "If nothing else, the variety of designations points out what a significant role the lion played in Israel's imagination in ancient times"; Brigitte Seifert, *Metaphorisches Reden von Gott im Hoseabuch* (FRLANT 166; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 158: "Die vielen verschiedenen Worte, die das Hebräische zur Bezeichnung von Löwen kennt, weisen darauf hin, daß dieses Tier wohl bekannt war und im Bewußtsein der Menschen eine wichtige Rolle spielte." The importance of the lion is reflected not only in

issues in the MT of Lam 3:10 and 2 Sam 23:20. In both cases, the Kethib is **אריה** or **האריה** while the Qere reads **ארי** or **הארי**, respectively. In the case of 2 Sam 23:20, the parallel in 1 Chr 11:22 reads **הארי**. The Qere at 2 Sam 23:20 could, therefore, be a case of later harmonization.³⁵ Even if that is the case, the Kethib/Qere issue at Lam 3:10 must be explained.³⁶ Admittedly, the difference would be minimal if **ארי** and **אריה** are understood as simple by-forms, as they are by many scholars. The by-form interpretation can be debated, however (see Appendix 1), and, even if it is correct, the preservation of two different forms in the Masoretic written and reading traditions should not be underestimated. It may reflect an awareness that there was a difference between these two terms, at least from the Masoretes' perspective.³⁷ In short, even this minor point might reflect an intimate knowledge of lions.³⁸

Another obvious observation, but one that is not without zoological significance, is that the Hebrew Bible contains references to individual lions as well as to groups of lions.³⁹ Both female and male lions are discussed, though the latter clearly predominate, getting the lion's share as it were. The lion's young and its rearing of young also receive mention, though the latter is limited almost exclusively to Ezekiel 19. Given the highly metaphorical nature of this

the number of terms or the number of passages in the Hebrew Bible that discuss lions, but also in the amount of semantically related terms used to evoke the lion image (see Appendix 2).

³⁵ Similar harmonizations are found in the Versions. Note, e.g., the reading of **אריה** in the Samaritan Pentateuch at Num 23:24, 24:9.

³⁶ Note also Nah 2:12–13, where a plural form of **ארי** occurs with **אריה** (see Appendix 1).

³⁷ If so, this is *contra* scholars who advocate the opposite. See, e.g., *TWOT* 1:69: "There is no demonstrable difference between the two [words]."

³⁸ Alternatively, the K/Q at Lam 3:10 may simply be an instance where the Masoretes are reflecting and preserving variants from different oral, dialectical, and/or literary traditions. Alternatively, it may have to do with the particular combination "lion-bear." This word-pair is frequent and occurs in a fairly typical pattern. Of the twelve times **רב** occurs in the Hebrew Bible it is found with the lion seven times (not including Lam 3:10). Five of those seven occurrences use **ארי** with **רב**, often in parallel (1 Sam 17:34, 36, 37; Amos 5:19; Prov 28:15). Hos 13:8 has the bear, the lion (**לביא**) and the beast of the field together. The last instance, Isa 11:7, uses **אריה** in context with **רב**, but without putting the terms in parallel. Additionally, Sir 25:16–17 finds the lion (Greek: *λέωντι*; Hebrew: not extant) and the bear (**דוב**; Greek: *ἄρκος*) together, but, again, the terms are not technically in parallel. In short, the only instance where **אריה** occurs with **רב** is in Isa 11:7 and there the terms are not in parallel. This may explain the Q of Lam 3:10: when a parallel lion-term for **רב** is needed, **ארי** is the lexeme of choice.

³⁹ Groups are mentioned in Judg 14:5; 2 Kgs 17:25, 26; Zech 11:3; Ps 104:21–22; Job 38:39–40; Song 4:8; Lam 4:3; and Dan 6:8, 13, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25, 28. Judg 14:5 is noteworthy in its mention of a **אריית**. This odd construct phrase might signify "a young lion (from a/the pride) of lions." See Appendix 1. Of the various lion terms, **אריה**, **לִיש**, and **נור** never occur in the plural, while **כפיר**, **לביא**, **ארי**, and **אריה** do.

passage it is unclear how much of it might apply to actual animals in the wild or ancients' conception thereof.⁴⁰

This last point prompts a further observation. With the comparative shortage of naturalistic passages, the naturalistic information derivable from such is also limited. While this might at first seem to hamper an analysis of the lion's significance in the user's sign-context, this need not be the case. Even with the limited number of naturalistic passages in the Hebrew Bible, a number of insights into the ancients' understanding of the lion can be gleaned. These insights are catalogued below. Given the wide attestation (including some instances in metaphorical passages) of several of these, it is apparent that they would have been primary among the aspects operative in the use of leonine imagery and metaphor.

2.2.2. *The Lion's Anatomy and Physiology*

The body of a lion—a dead one—is mentioned in Judg 14:8–9 using two different terms: *נפלה* (14:8) and *גויה* (14:8, 9). While these terms refer to a real, albeit dead, lion, the passage is nevertheless problematic, insofar as the carcass has been inhabited by a swarm of honey-making bees and their hive. Some have doubted that such a phenomenon could happen in the natural world.⁴¹ In short, this lion may be symbolic (see further below) despite its naturalistic presentation.

Other parts of the lion's anatomy are also mentioned in the naturalistic passages: the paw (*יד*) of the lion (1 Sam 17:34, 37; Dan 6:28), its beard (*זקן*; 1 Sam 17:35), and its mouth (*פה*; 1 Sam 17:35; Amos 3:12; Dan 6:23) are all discussed. Such elements are of secondary interest to the biblical texts, however, which tend to focus in both metaphorical and naturalistic instances on what might be termed the primary aspects of the lion.

2.2.3. *The Primary Aspects of the Lion*

2.2.3.1. *The Lion's Roar.* Preeminent among the characteristics that receive special emphasis in the Hebrew Bible is the lion's roar. Various terms are used to describe this activity: *שאג* (Judg 14:5; Amos 3:4, 8; Zech 11:3; Ps 104:21); *נתן קול* (Amos 3:4); *הנם* (Isa 30:6).⁴² While some of these terms are used in

⁴⁰ Note, however, Ingo Kottsieper, “‘Was ist deine Mutter?': Eine Studie zu Ez 19,2–9,” *ZAW* 105 (1993): 444–61 who thinks that, in its original form, the text concerned “ein profanes Lied, dessen Sitz im Leben vielleicht die Löwenjagd selbst ist” (455).

⁴¹ See, e.g., Moore, *Judges*, 332–33 who states that the story might reflect the archaic notion of spontaneous generation. His conclusion is worth noting: “The story, however, does not represent Samson's discovery as an every-day occurrence; it is part of a wonderful history, and to be judged not by the prosaic possibilities of fact, but by the verisimilitude of the marvellous” (332).

⁴² Repointing the MT to *גויה* (from *הנם* [so D. Winton Thomas in *BHS*], though *הנם* and *הנמה* are semantically related; see *HALOT* 1:242, 250, 251; 2:676). Alternatively, one

other contexts and of other entities, the metaphorical instances of lion imagery add additional terms for leonine vocalization.

The roar is associated with two primary aspects. The first is the lion's quest for prey. The lion roars when it wants food or has caught its food. Ps 104:21 is an example of the former; Amos 3:4, the latter.⁴³ The second aspect is the result of the lion's roar: fear. Here Amos 3:8a is paradigmatic: "The lion has roared, who is not afraid?" The lion's roar strikes fear into all those who hear it. This fear also seems to be at work in the description of the desert in Isa 30:6: It is a land of trouble and distress, of "strong lion, and <roaring> young lion." This is a difficult land and the people at the end of the journey (the Egyptians) will be of no help. Moreover, the journey is dangerous, full of vipers and flying serpents, not to mention hungry lions.

These twin aspects of the roar make Samson's act of killing the lion all the more impressive. It is not just any lion, but a *roaring* one that he encounters on his way to Timnah (Judg 14:6).⁴⁴ The implication is that this lion is hungry and/or preparing to hunt, but the expected result, fear, is totally absent. Instead, the lion meets its match, or in this case, its superior.

2.2.3.2. The Lion's Predation. The lion's roar strikes fear because the lion is a powerful predator. Numerous passages highlight the lion's predatory capabilities and habits. In 1 Sam 17:34, David describes how the lion came and took sheep from his flock. When David gave pursuit and encountered the lion,

might emend to נִהָרָה (cf. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986], 542 n. 9; *HALOT* 2:676).

⁴³ See on this verse, Edward R. Hope, "Problems of Interpretation in Amos 3.4," *BT* 42 (1991): 201–205. Hope points out, contrary to many scholars, that lions do not roar *as* or *when* they hunt—during which they are actually silent—nor when they have attacked or killed prey (*contra*, e.g., J. A. Motyer, *The Day of the Lion: The Message of Amos* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1974], 27, 69 [cf. 71, 75]; King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 129; and Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25* [WBC 26; Dallas: Word, 1991], 184). They do roar, however, when they are hungry (so Ps 104:21); and lions frequently vocalize (e.g., snarl, growl, grunt) while eating—though the latter is not the full-throated roar. Hope therefore translates 3:4: "Does a lion growl in the bush unless it has prey? Does a hunting lion snarl in its hiding place unless it has caught something?" (204). The behavior is, accordingly, a warning sound, not a destructive one. For information regarding leonine vocalization, see Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 103–15, who catalogued "at least nine more or less distinct expressions" (103). His conclusions regarding the full roar confirm Hope's. Lions roar: 1) to call one another and to advertise their presence; 2) to "avoid contact, by, for instance, delineating the pride area"; 3) to enhance "the physical presence of an animal by making it more conspicuous"; and 4) "to strengthen the bonds of the group" (citations from 109–10). Roaring in "agonistic situations" or prior to hunting were not observed by Schaller.

⁴⁴ This passage may be an indication that שָׂאֵן refers to more (and less!) than the full-throated lion roar as that is not displayed until subadulthood or 2.5 years of age (Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 103, 107). Samson's lion is, notably, a כַּפִּיר.

it rose up against him (1 Sam 17:35). In 1 Kgs 13:24 and 20:36, the lion finds and kills a human being.

Amos 3:4 indicates that the lion has and captures “prey” (טֶרֶף)—a term that designates something ripped or torn (cf. Gen 37:33; 44:28). This image is graphically illustrated in Amos 3:12 where what is recovered from the lion’s mouth is pitifully meager: two legs or (!) a piece of an ear (cf. Exod 22:12).⁴⁵ Prey is what satisfies the lion’s appetite; it is obtained by hunting (Job 38:39). Young lions roar for prey and seek food—and the Psalmist says they do this from God (Ps 104:21; cf. Job 38:39–40).

The lion captures prey with the purpose of devouring it (Prov 22:13; cf. Gen 37:33). The lion’s victims are torn, broken (1 Kgs 13:26), and struck (1 Kgs 20:36; Jer 5:6); their bones are crushed (Dan 6:25); finally, they are killed (1 Kgs 13:24, 26; 2 Kgs 17:25–26; Dan 6:25).

But what did the lion eat? The texts remain, for the most part, unspecific. Sirach 13:19 indicates that lions preyed upon wild donkeys in the wilderness. Gazelles were probably also a frequent target.⁴⁶ Given the habits of modern lions, not to mention 1 Samuel 17, it is probable that lions would also have attacked domesticated livestock. Such incidents certainly lurk (quite literally!) behind the legislation of Exod 22:12 (cf. Code of Hammurabi #266), which shows, furthermore, that humans who opposed the lion usually had little success (cf. Amos 3:12).⁴⁷ It is probable that the lion’s predatory dominance is what led to statements about the animal’s proverbial strength and fearlessness (Prov 30:30). The lion is, quite simply, “the strong(est) one” (Judg 14:14, 18) and “the eater” (Judg 14:14). Underscoring the lion’s predatory dominance and reflective of the fear it inspired is the observation that, in the Hebrew Bible, the most frequently mentioned victims or potential victims of the lion are human beings.⁴⁸

Several of the texts speaking of human victims are discussed below. For now it is enough to note that even in the relatively few naturalistic passages, the Hebrew Bible often highlights the lion’s predatory abilities and frequently focuses these on human targets. No wonder one flees before the lion (Amos 5:19)! Moreover, this situation indicates that there may be more to the sluggard’s fear of encountering a lion in the streets than it might, on the face of it, first appear (Prov 22:13; 26:13).

⁴⁵ Cf. Gerhard Pfeifer, “‘Rettung’ als Beweis der Vernichtung (Amos 3,12),” *ZAW* 100 (1988): 269–77. Oswald Loretz, “Vergleich und Kommentar in Amos 3,12,” *BZ* 20 (1976): 122–25 thinks the mention of “two legs or a piece of an ear” is a later addition.

⁴⁶ Keel, Küchler, Uehlinger, *Orte und Landschaften*, 143.

⁴⁷ For metaphorical passages, cf. Isa 31:4. Of course, David in 1 Samuel 17 is a notable exception that is treated in further detail below.

⁴⁸ E.g., 1 Kgs 13:24, 26; 20:36; 2 Kgs 17:25–26; Isa 15:9; Jer 5:6; Amos 5:19; Prov 22:13; 26:13; and Daniel 6; cf. also Gen 37:33; 44:28; Jer 12:5. The same is equally true of Judg 14:5 and 1 Sam 17:35, 37, where the lion turns its attention, in attack, toward Samson and David.

2.2.4. *The Lion's Habitat*

2.2.4.1. *General and Specific Locales.* Of course, the fact that it is a “sluggard” (עצל) who worries about meeting up with a lion in the road may be an indication that such a possibility can safely be eliminated from serious consideration.⁴⁹ Even so, a lion is encountered in the road in 1 Kgs 13:24, 28 and this raises the issue of the lion's habitat. Was the lion prevalent enough that it could be observed first-hand, thereby leading to the preservation of accurate naturalistic images and information in the Hebrew Bible? Was it widespread enough that humans actually encountered it in close quarters? Was it really a “man-eater” (cf. Ezek 19:3, 6; 22:25)? Or is this yet one more reason to consider many of these “naturalistic” passages to be, in reality, metaphorical in nature?

These questions are particularly significant when it comes to urban contexts. There is some evidence from ancient Near Eastern literature, particularly omen-texts and treaty-curses, that may indicate that lions located in urban locales in the Hebrew Bible are stereotypical literary motifs.⁵⁰ This is less likely to be the case with other locales, especially non-urban, rural, and wilderness contexts, all of which are places where lions are typically expected to live.

Many of these rural locales are mentioned in the naturalistic passages. Here, too, the texts provide both general and specific information. Under the general category are those passages that state that the lion lives in the “pride of the Jordan” (נֶאֱוֶן הַיַּרְדֵּן; cf., e.g., Zech 11:3). Although some scholars have taken this to refer to the swelling of the Jordan (at flood time),⁵¹ the presence of the same language in Jer 49:19 and 50:44, metaphorical passages that place the lion in the same area, seems to confirm that the locale envisioned is the valley of the Jordan rift, perhaps especially those parts where the vegetation is lush.⁵² This information, in turn, adds further significance to Jer 12:5 where God⁵³

⁴⁹ On the עצל in Proverbs, a figure who is treated less harshly there than the fool and the wicked, see Richard J. Clifford, *Proverbs: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 75–76. See *ibid.*, 198 and 232 on 22:12 and 26:13, respectively.

⁵⁰ For the treaty-curses and omen-texts see further Chapter 4. For the impact of the former on several texts from the Hebrew Bible, see Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 115–79, 185–93. See also Delbert R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (BibOr 16; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964), 55–57.

⁵¹ This is especially true of many of the Versions. See William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986–1996), 1:264, though he does not advocate this position himself.

⁵² See McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:264–65 for such a view, supported also by the Targum and Rashi. See also BDB 145 and Har-El, “The Pride of the Jordan.”

⁵³ The speaker has been debated. Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 287 does not think that God is speaking in Jer 12:5 though most commentators do (see, e.g., J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 355; William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary*

questions Jeremiah, asking Jeremiah how he will fare in the pride of the Jordan—that is, among the lions—if he is unable to stand in a safe land. A final piece of supporting evidence for connecting the lion with the thickets of the Jordan valley may be found in the Madaba map, which depicts a lion in the thickets of lower Jordan.⁵⁴

The lion is connected with the forest in Jer 5:6 and Amos 3:4. Elsewhere, it is said to inhabit or frequent “dens” (מַעֲנָה; Amos 3:8, Song 4:8, Ps 104:22; Job 38:40) or “lair” (אֶרֶב; Job 38:40). What these terms designate is not altogether certain. Hope has argued that “anyone who knows anything about lions knows that they don’t live in dens, except in zoos.”⁵⁵ Instead, “lions roam constantly, and they seldom sleep more than one day at a time in a particular place, although they do have favourite places to which they return from time to time to rest.” Hence, lions “have no ‘den’ or ‘lair’ to which they return to sleep, or to which they carry prey.”⁵⁶ Hope argues, in this light, that מַעֲנָה in Amos 3:4 is better translated “hiding place,” especially given the parallel with יַעַר earlier in the line. Hope seems to have a valid point,⁵⁷ and, while his observations are based on African lions, they are likely to have held true also for the Asiatic species in antiquity.⁵⁸ In short, the lairs and dens in the texts listed above seem to be generic terms indicating the place—indeed, *any* place—where lions may reside.

It is quite a different matter when it comes to the den of lions (נֶבֶא דִּי אַרְיֹתָא or [נ]ב אַרְיֹתָא)⁵⁹ discussed at length in Daniel 6 (6:8, 13, 17, 20, 25). While the story gives every indication that these lions are to be understood as real animals, many have questioned whether the story is in fact accurate in its description of a den of lions maintained by Persian kings.⁶⁰ John J. Collins, for instance, notes the lack of archaeological data for such dens or pits and the improbability that animals could survive for long in such constructions even if they existed.⁶¹ More recently, Karel van der Toorn has

on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1–25 [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986], 379; Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 180–81).

⁵⁴ See Keel, Küchler, Uehlinger, *Orte und Landschaften*, 143.

⁵⁵ Hope, “Problems of Interpretation in Amos 3.4,” 202.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁵⁷ See Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 12–15, 119–125, 267–271, also of African lions.

⁵⁸ See “Asiatic Lion,” n. p.

⁵⁹ For the two constructions, see W. Randall Garr, “On the Alternation between Construct and *dx* Phrases in Biblical Aramaic,” *JSS* 35 (1990): 213–31 who argues that they are not equivalent. Rather, “[t]he construct phrase may convey a nonreferential...term [as in 6:8, 13: ‘a (= any) den of lions’]. Its members are also relatively less important in the specific context. The members of the *dx* phrase, in contrast, are relatively more important and more prominent in the episode” (226).

⁶⁰ E.g., Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* (AB 23; Garden City: Doubleday, 1978), 199, though they note, from a later period, the *hypogeum* of the Roman Colosseum.

⁶¹ John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 267 and n. 44. So also Karel van der Toorn, “In the Lions’ Den: The

argued that the writer of Daniel has misunderstood what was originally a metaphorical description of one's enemies as lions and the court as a pit of lions in Babylonian literature and taken it literally.⁶² All this casts serious doubt on the reality of the "real" lions of Daniel 6; they increasingly look more and more like a literary *topos* and certainly become such in later literature (see, for example, Bel and the Dragon). Indeed, a minor point that might support such a conclusion is the observation that the den becomes, in 6:21, the den of *Daniel*!

Even so, it must be remembered that lion-hunting was the sport of kings in the ancient Near East (see further Chapter 4 §4.3.1.2). These lions had to be kept *somewhere*, perhaps in royal zoological gardens, though they are often shown in cages prior to and during the actual royal hunt. The Hebrew Bible itself knows of lions in cisterns (בּוּר/בְּאֵר; 2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22) or pits (שְׁחָת; Ezek 19:4, 8).⁶³ The context of Ezekiel 19—an extended metaphorical passage—is clearly one of *hunting* a lion, however, not *maintaining* one.⁶⁴ The same is true of 2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22, though the context is not as clear.

In short, the den of lions in Daniel may very well be a literary creation serving a particular function in the context of the narrative. The creation may, of course, be an inadvertent one based—as per van der Toorn—on a misunderstanding of a still earlier, metaphorical motif describing one's enemies as lions and the court as a den of such animals. Alternatively, the creation could be deliberate, tying Daniel into the great heroes of old, notably Samson, David, and—to a lesser extent—Benaiah, each of whom were renowned for their victories *vis-à-vis* the lion (and the lion's mouth; cf. 2 Tim

Babylonian Background of a Biblical Motif," *CBQ* 60 (1998): 637; Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 199. Much depends in this argument on what, exactly, the Aramaic term *g^{ab}* signifies, with many assuming the pit of Daniel 6 "is rather absurdly thought of as of the nature of a bottle dungeon" (Norman W. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965], 90; cf. Collins, *Daniel*, 267, 273 n. 89; Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 199; John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* [WBC 30; Dallas: Word, 1989], 124, 128). A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (rev. ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 46, however, states that "Kings kept lions in cages or pits from the Ur III period on." Unfortunately, he cites no texts to corroborate the statement.

⁶² Originally in a paper given at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (San Francisco; November 1997). See now van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den," 626–40; and idem, *In de leeuwenkuil: Oratie uitgesproken op 13 maart 1998 in de Aula van de Universiteit van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers AUP, 1998). I thank Prof. Dr. van der Toorn for making his paper available to me prior to publication and for a copy of the oration. His argument on literal misreading of metaphor depends, in part, on A. Hilhorst, "Biblical Metaphors Taken Literally," in *Text and Testimony: Essays on New Testament and Apocryphal Literature in Honour of A. F. J. Klijn* (ed. T. Baarda et al.; Kampen: Kok, 1988), 123–31.

⁶³ Cognate terms, namely *b-ru* (*b-rtu*) and *saj tu* are also attested in Akkadian (see van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den," 637 and n. 31; *AHW* 1:141, 2:1008).

⁶⁴ So also Collins, *Daniel*, 267 and n. 46, who cites the use of hunting pits in the Gilgamesh epic. Cf. van der Toorn, "In the Lions' Den," 637.

4:17; Heb 11:32–33). Moreover, the creation, whether deliberate or not, might be based, not on Babylonian court and wisdom literature,⁶⁵ but on the motif of the lion hunt (Ezekiel 19; 2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22), as well as the frequent presentation of enemies as lion-like hunters, laying a trap (often a pit) for the psalmist (see Pss 7:16; 9:16; 35:7–8; 57:7; 94:13).⁶⁶

The Hebrew Bible also associates the lion with a number of specific places, many of which are named. Deut 33:22, for instance, states that the lion that is Dan “leaps forth”⁶⁷ from Bashan. Given the metaphorical nature of this passage it is difficult to say whether the location has to do with Dan or with the lion, or even if הַבַּשָּׁן here is a geographical name (GN) at all. Other locales are mentioned in the metaphorical passages,⁶⁸ but the naturalistic passages contain a number of specific references, covering all points of the compass. So, for example, Isa 30:6 places the lion in the Negeb (South), whereas Song 4:8 associates it with Lebanon and the peaks of Amana, Senir, and Hermon (North). Isa 15:9 connects the lion with Moab (East) and Judg 14:5 indicates that Samson found his lion near the vineyards of Timnah (West). Two texts, 1 Kgs 13:11–32 and 2 Kgs 17:25–26, mention lions in the heartland of Israel: in the environs of Bethel and in Samaria and its cities, respectively (see **Map 2.2**).⁶⁹

2.2.4.2. Geographical Names (GNs). These specific references may be rounded out by reference to a number of GNs that are or may be etymologically related

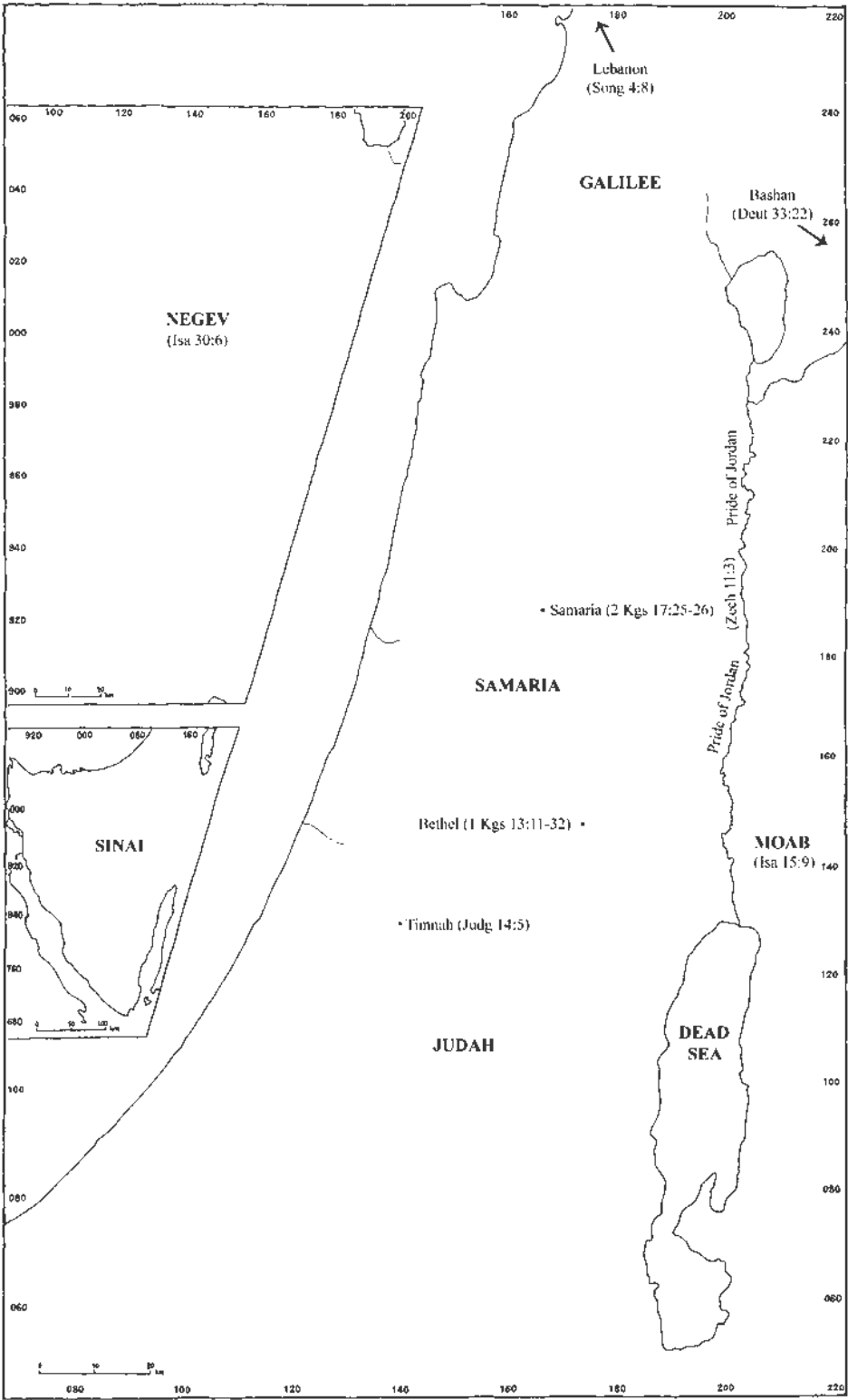
⁶⁵ Van der Toorn, “In the Lions’ Den,” 637–38 simply assumes that the author of Daniel 6 was familiar with tales like *Ludlul* and *Ahiqar*. Such an assertion obviously needs further demonstration if it is to be believed, especially as van der Toorn’s closest parallel is from one letter and occurs in a broken context (!), though “lion’s pit” (*gab-lī ša UR.MAH*) is secure. For the text and translation, see Simo Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (SAA 10; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1993), 232 (no. 294, line 39); cf. van der Toorn, “In the Lions’ Den,” 632. See also Chapter 4 (§4.2.4) of the present work for further discussion.

⁶⁶ For the possible influences of these passages on Daniel 6 see also van der Toorn, “In the Lions’ Den,” 638–39; Collins, *Daniel*, 267, 271; Porteous, *Daniel*, 87; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 123.

⁶⁷ This translation of the difficult יִזְנֵק in MT follows the LXX. Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (repr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 69 suggest (and emend to) “Who shies away from a viper,” in the light of Ugaritic *ḥṣn* > Hebrew *ḥṣn* (ibid., 80 n. 74; so also *HALOT* 1:276). Post, “Lion,” 127 thinks יִזְנֵק “expresses the *fatal leap* by which the lion bears down his victim” (emphasis his).

⁶⁸ This would include both specific and unspecific locales. For the latter, note, e.g., Gen 49:9. Cross and Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 56 n. 27 state that “the precise meaning of this colon [בִּנְיָמִן בְּנֵי עֲלִיָּת] is not certain. The usual explanation, i.e. that the lion rises from his prey and ascends to his mountain lair, seems the best so far suggested.”

⁶⁹ For lions in the area of Bethel see, e.g., John Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary* (2d ed.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 331.



Map 2.2. Distribution of Locations in the Hebrew Bible that Mention the Lion.

to one of the lion words (see Appendix 1).⁷⁰ Clear examples include the GNs “Laish” (לַיִשׁ; Judg 18:7, 14, 27, 29; cf. Josh 19:47),⁷¹ the former name of Dan, and “Laisha” (לַיִשָּׁה; Isa 10:30), though the location of the latter—if it is in fact a feminine form and not Laish suffixed with ה-locative—is unknown.⁷² Both GNs seem to be related to the rare lion word לַיִשׁ (see Isa 30:6; Prov 30:30; Job 4:11).

Other GNs relate to more frequently-attested words for the lion: Lebaoth (לְבָאוֹת; Josh 15:32), for instance, though the full GN is apparently Beth-Lebaoth (בֵּית לְבָאוֹת; Josh 19:6). The exact location is unknown, but in Josh 19:6, it is a Simeonite town listed between Hazar-Susah and Sharuhēn, and thus probably to be located in the Judean Negeb.⁷³

The etymological relationship between several other GNs and one of the other words for lion is more tenuous and debatable. Included in this category would be כְּפִירִים (or הַכְּפִירִים) mentioned in Neh 6:2. The exact location is unknown, though, if a GN,⁷⁴ it was apparently in the Ono valley in the lowlands northwest of Jerusalem near Lod.⁷⁵ However, many scholars, especially on the basis of the Versions, have derived the term, not from כְּפִיר (“young lion”), but from כֶּפֶר (“open village”). The same situation obtains for the GN כְּפִירָה (Josh 9:17; 18:26; Ezra 2:25; Neh 7:29),⁷⁶ a location in Benjamin (ḵ irbet el-kefāreh), in the highlands of former Gibeonite territory.⁷⁷

Two different GNs may relate to גֹּר (“cub”): Gur “near Ibleam” (2 Kgs 9:27) and Gur-Baal (גֹּר בַּעַל; 2 Chr 26:7), though the derivation of both may

⁷⁰ So already Wünsche, *Die Bildersprache*, 57.

⁷¹ Note that Josh 19:47 calls this same site לַיִשׁ, on which see Appendix 1. J. Simons, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament: A Concise Commentary in XXXII Chapters* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), 302–303 regards the reference to Laish in Judg 18:14 to be inauthentic; conversely, he would read Laish for Shilo at Judg 18:31. Whatever the case, Laish is mentioned in both the Execration Texts and Mari archives—both in connection with Hazor. See Dale W. Manor, “Laish (Place),” *ABD* 4:130–31.

⁷² Simons, *Geographical and Topographical Texts*, identifies Laisha with 𐤠𐤍𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤁𐤏𐤕, a site “somewhat more than 2 kms sw. of 𐤠𐤍𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤁𐤏𐤕” northwest of Jerusalem (482; cf. 422). A location in the vicinity of Jerusalem seems to accord well with Isa 10:30.

⁷³ See Appendix 1 for a discussion of 1 Chr 4:31 and the GN Beth-Biri, which might be related to Beth-Lebaoth. Simons, *Geographical and Topographical Texts*, 145 thinks that Beth-Biri “may survive in ḡebel el-biri (almost 10 kms sw. of el-ḵ alāʾah),” but adds that “[w]hile Beth-Lebaoth of Josh. xix is doubtless the same as Lebaoth of Josh. xv, Beth-Biri of 1 Ch. may or may not represent the same place” (153).

⁷⁴ Some have challenged this, e.g., Richard Schiemann, “Covenanting with the Princes: Neh. VI 2,” *VT* 17 (1967): 367–69; followed by Kaplan, “The Lion,” 67–68. See further Appendix 1.

⁷⁵ See D. J. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 173; and Jacob M. Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (AB 14; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 135, 138. Simons, *Geographical and Topographical Texts*, 388, thinks the reading is uncertain but admits that the LXX is unhelpful.

⁷⁶ Cf. also EA 273:4 and 274:4, written from a place near Aijalon (see further Chapter 3 §3.7 and Appendix 1).

⁷⁷ See Simons, *Geographical and Topographical Texts*, 176 (cf. also 272, 379).

be from גִּיר, “to sojourn.” The first site is apparently on the way from Jezreel to Samaria, though this has been debated.⁷⁸ The latter is probably to be located in the south or southeast of Judah.⁷⁹

No less uncertain is the reference to הָאֲרִיָּה in 2 Kgs 15:25, which could be a GN, perhaps somewhere near Argob—if the latter is also understood as a GN.⁸⁰ However, most scholars have chosen to take הָאֲרִיָּה here as a proper name (PN), though the unexpected articular form may indicate that it is perhaps better understood as a military designation of some sort. More certain in location, though not in exact significance or derivation, is the GN אֲרִיאֵל (“Ariel”), a name for Jerusalem in Isa 29:1, 2, and 7 (see Excursus 1: Ariel).

To be sure, many of the texts adduced thus far have been debated as to their meaning; still further, many of the GNs have been doubted as to their etymological derivation or their specific location. Yet even if several of the passages discussed above are eliminated from consideration, the Hebrew Bible still places the lion in a number of geographical locations throughout the land and seems to know of a handful of GNs that are related to terms meaning “lion” (see **Map 2.3**). It is tempting to speculate that these GNs may have received their names from someone spotting a lion or lions in their vicinity at some point in the site’s ancient history. Whatever the case, on the basis of such evidence—not to mention the evidence to be discussed in Chapter 3 (see especially **Map 3.1**)—the Hebrew Bible indicates that the lion was apparently widely distributed and known throughout the land in sightings, stories, and sites.

2.2.5. Summary

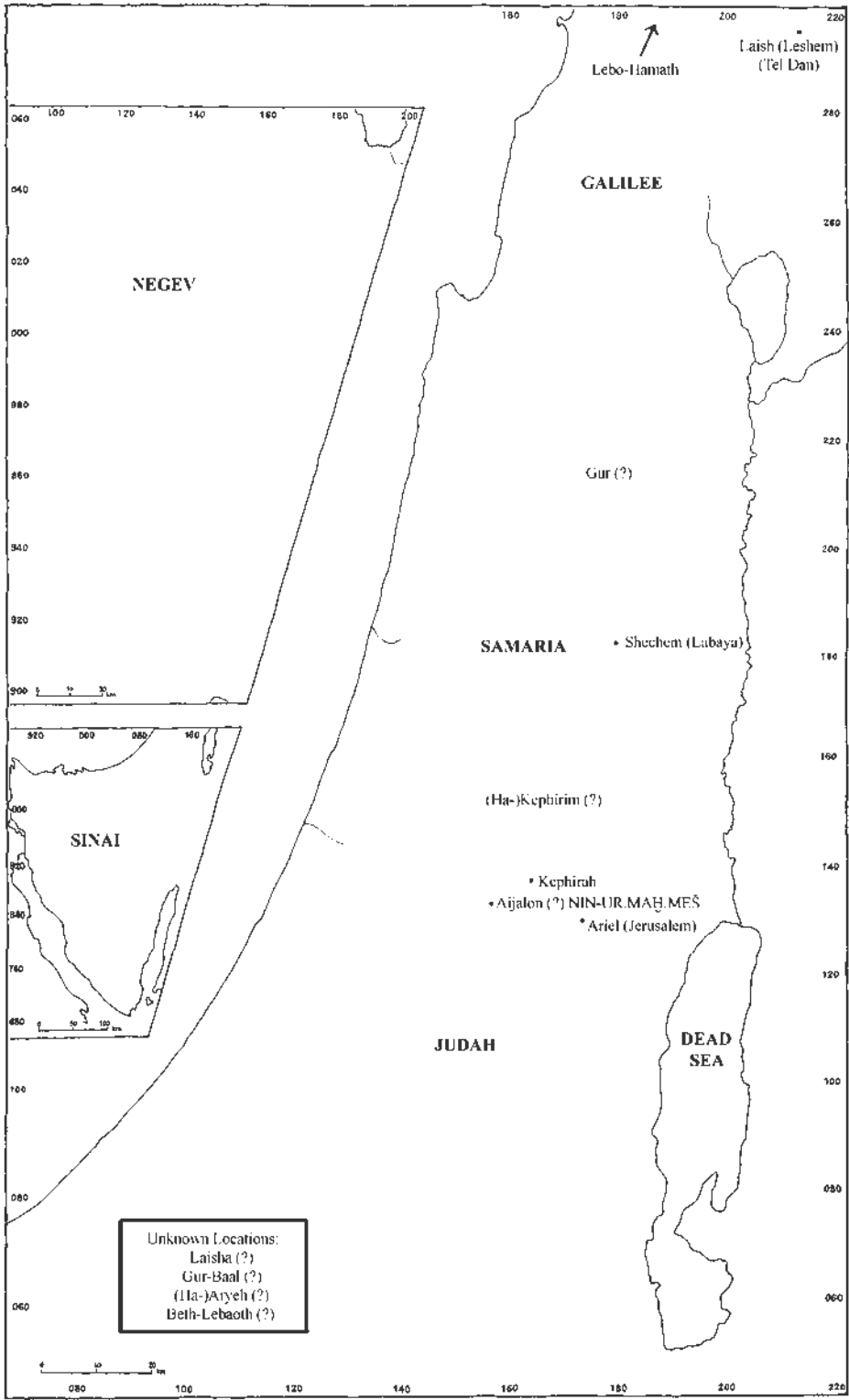
In summing up, it is important to remember the difficulties surrounding many of the texts discussed above. Preeminent among them remains the problem that many of the passages marked here as “naturalistic” may use the lion in a way that is, in fact, metaphorical or, at the very least, symbolic. Yet, if this is true, then the converse is equally applicable: many of the metaphorical passages to be discussed next contain important naturalistic data.⁸¹ That information could

⁷⁸ Adam Zertal, “Gur (Place),” *ABD* 2:1099 has identified Gur with Khirbet en-Najjar. Simons, however, has argued that it is unlikely that a place named Gur ever existed and that further proof of this can be found in the LXX (*Geographical and Topographical Texts*, 363).

⁷⁹ But note Simons’ redivision and emendation so as to obtain “in the Negeb” as the original reading (*Geographical and Topographical Texts*, 371). Other scholars follow suit, especially on the basis of the readings in the LXX and Vulgate, for which see Appendix 1.

⁸⁰ GN Argob is apparently located in Bashan in 1 Kgs 4:13. Cf. Deut 33:22 for a connection between אֲרִיָּה and הַבָּשָׁן.

⁸¹ Note Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOTSup 65; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 58: “A characteristic of imagery is, then, *the dialectic relation between the informative and the performative functions*, in the sense that imagery is the bearer of information that can be derived from the image without thereby exhausting it.”



Map 2.3. Distribution of Geographical Names Related to the Lion.

be used to add to, and round out, the naturalistic data.⁸² Indeed, some of the metaphorical passages to be discussed below have already been mentioned above. Still, in the light of methodological considerations, I have attempted to restrict the naturalistic data to that which can be culled, in the main, from the naturalistic passages themselves.

Even in this smaller corpus of passages that apparently refer to real lions, much can be learned about the anatomy, characteristics, behavior, predation, prey, and habitats of the lion. On the one hand, this information is not particularly surprising; it casts no new light on what is now known about lions.⁸³ Even so, this information is significant insofar as it demonstrates that many of the characteristics of lions known today were also known in antiquity. Moreover, and more importantly, the emphasis on the fearsome aspects of the lion—its roar, killing, rending, devouring, and so forth—demonstrates that these were the characteristics of lions that were “uppermost in people’s minds” (Henle). They comprise, therefore, the main elements in “the system of associated commonplaces” (Korpel) belonging to the word and metaphorical vehicle, “lion.”

Yet despite the naturalistic information that can be gleaned from these texts, it must be reiterated that most of these passages have a broader purpose than the simple preservation of zoological data about lions in antiquity. Nowhere is this clearer than in those passages that describe lions acting in atypical fashion. The lion of 1 Kings 13, for instance, is exceptional for how it stands still without attacking the donkey or eating the body of the man of God that it had just slain (1 Kgs 13:24, 25, 28). In each case, the oddity of this situation is highlighted by the statement that the lion stood “by the body.” Similarly, the behavior of the lions of Daniel 6 is quite unexpected: they do not hurt Daniel (6:23). Only later do they behave as lions do, by harming and devouring Daniel’s enemies who are presented to them as food.

Other examples might be mentioned; perhaps the most significant are the texts that describe how the fearsome hunter, the lion, becomes *the hunted*; how the killer becomes *the killed*. David, of course, does both—going after a lion, seizing it, striking and killing it (1 Sam 17:35, 36). What was true for the king was also true for his warriors. Benaiah, son of Jehoida, perhaps one of the Thirty,⁸⁴ commander of the Cherethites and the Pelethites (David’s personal

⁸² Additional naturalistic information can be gleaned from the material presented in Chapters 3–4.

⁸³ We are told virtually nothing, for instance, of many of the most important characteristics of the lion’s behavior: social relations, mating, and so forth. Some metaphorical passages (e.g., Ezekiel 19; cf. Lam 4:3) include such information, including data about young and the rearing of young, but it is certainly not extensive or primary.

⁸⁴ For the ambiguity in Benaiah’s status (whether a member of the Three or the Thirty or in between the two), see Frederick W. Knobloch, “Benaiah,” *ABD* 1:666–68. Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1964), 406 argues strongly that Benaiah was not among the Three.

body guard; see 2 Sam 8:18; 20:23; 23:23//1 Chr 11:25), did “great deeds,” including striking two *ḥr(y)ḥl* of Moab⁸⁵ and killing a lion in a pit on a snowy day (2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22). Certainly the most remarkable lion-killer was Samson. He dispatched a roaring young lion with ease, ripping it apart as if it were a goat (הגדי)⁸⁶—and this with his bare hands (Judg 14:5–6).⁸⁷ This could be good reason to consider this an atypical, symbolic lion. At the very least, the person who can do this sort of thing in this sort of way is certainly no typical person! Yet the fact that Samson is not alone in killing lions in the Hebrew Bible leads to another, more general observation: despite their legendary prowess, boldness, strength, fearsomeness, and the like, lions are killable. That is, the lion is a very real, very mortal creature,⁸⁸ at least in naturalistic contexts, despite its legendary and mythological use in many other contexts. At the same time, the lion’s legendary and mythological status—based in part on its clearly evident power and predatory dominance in the wild—is what makes the exploits of Samson, David, and Benaiah so remarkable. These people actually killed *lions*!

That amazing feat, along with its attendant implications, leads directly into the next step in this overview/taxonomy of the lion image: typing the metaphorical instances.

2.3. METAPHORICAL USAGES

The naturalistic passages have been treated fairly extensively because of the light they cast on the user’s sign-context and because they have typically been ignored in previous treatments of leonine metaphor. The metaphorical passages, in contrast, have often been discussed in the secondary literature; treatments typing them in various categories can be easily found there.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ The text-critical issues involved in this phrase are rather involved, as is the interpretation of the term (see Knobloch, “Benaiah,” 1:667). Note the pointing in the MT as well as the orthography in the parallel at 1 Chr 11:22: אַרְיָאֵל. The term *ḥr(y)ḥl* also occurs in the Mesha Stela line 12. See further Chapter 3 (§3.7) and Excursus 1: Ariel.

⁸⁶ Presumably the kid was easy to kill as it was often used for food or sacrifice (see Gen 27:9, 16; Judg 6:19; 13:15, 19; cf. Exod 23:19; 34:26; Deut 14:21). However, Moore thinks “the point of comparison is not so much the ease with which it was done, as the way in which it was done; he tore the lion limb from limb with his bare hands” (*Judges*, 331).

⁸⁷ Othniel Margalith, “The Legends of Samson/Heracles,” *VT* 37 (1987): 63–70, especially 66–68, has connected this feat with Greek heroes who do the same and has argued for Aegean influence (largely via Philistia, including its pottery) on the presentation. See further Chapter 5 (§5.3).

⁸⁸ Note Eccl 9:4, which speaks derogatorily of the dead lion.

⁸⁹ See G. Johannes Botterweck, “Gott und Mensch in den alttestamentlichen Löwenbildern,” in *Wort, Lied und Gottesspruch: Festschrift für Joseph Ziegler* (2 vols.; ed. Josef Schreiner; Würzburg: Echter, 1972), 2:117–28; idem, “אַרְיָאֵל *ḥr(y)ḥl*; אַרְיָאֵל *ḥr(y)ḥl*; גִּדְרֵי *gūr*; כֶּפְחִיר *kephîr*; לִבְיָא *lḥî*; לַיִשׁ *layish*; שַׁחַל *shachal*,” *TDOT* 1:374–88; F. Stolz, “אַרְיָאֵל *ḥr(y)ḥl* lion,” *TLOT* 1:170–72; Robert C. Stallman, “אַרְיָאֵל,” *NIDOTTE* 1:513–17; Klaus Koenen, “‘Süßes geht vom Starken aus’ (Ri 14,14): Vergleiche zwischen Gott und Tier im Alten

Indeed, the metaphorical instances of lion imagery in the Hebrew Bible could be typed any number of ways, including by the various words and syntagmas used.⁹⁰ Here, however, the materials have been presented in broad categories in a manner that is more comprehensive than previous attempts. The first two categories to be discussed stand in a bipolar relationship: the lion image is metaphorically employed 1) positively, as an image for the self or the righteous; or 2) negatively, as an image of the enemy or the wicked.

2.3.1. *The Lion as Friend: Positive Appropriation for the Self/Righteous*

Given the long-standing ancient Near Eastern tradition of using the lion image as a positive image depicting the prowess of important personages, supremely the king (see Chapter 4 §4.3.2), it is striking that this is found relatively infrequently in the Hebrew Bible. Not only is this true for the person of the monarch in the Hebrew Bible (see §2.3.3 below), it also holds true of more general, positive applications of the lion image for the self or for the righteous. These, too, are low in frequency.

Though limited in the Hebrew repertoire, this use is nevertheless found. One thinks immediately of the tribal blessings that apply this imagery to the eponymous ancestors of Israel. So, Judah is a lion's cub and behaves like a lion to such an extent that it would be better if he were not disturbed (Gen 49:9).⁹¹ Much the same is said in Num 24:9, apparently of Israel as a whole: he crouched down and laid down like a lion—who would rouse him? Quite similar is Num 23:24 where the people rise up like a lion and rouse themselves like a lion that will not rest until it has eaten prey and drunk the blood of its victims. The blessing of Moses employs the lion as an image for both Gad and Dan. Gad lives like a lion, ripping the arm and head (Deut 33:20). Dan, like Judah, is a lion's cub that leaps forth from Bashan (Deut 33:22)—though the meanings of both the verb and the locale are debated (see above and Appendix 3).

Tribal blessings such as these, given their brevity and opacity, are often uncertain in meaning and tone. Though they occur in blessing contexts, it has

Testament," *EvT* 55 (1995): 174–97, especially 187–97; Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998), 514–15; Wünsche, *Die Bildersprache*, 57–66; J. Hempel, "Jahwegleichnisse der israelitischen Propheten," *ZAW* 43 (1924): 74–104, especially 89–100.

⁹⁰ Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible," 53–73 thinks that virtually all instances of כפיר are metaphorical, given the fact that the term "is equally applicable to lions and to powerful men" (73). However, he mistakes such metaphorical usage as indication that the term's basic meaning is not actually "lion." While Kaplan's reasoning is problematic (see further Appendix 1), he is right in focusing attention on the dominant metaphorical aspect of כפיר.

⁹¹ Lions recline most of the day while resting. They arise, among other things, to hunt. See Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 119–28.

been questioned whether the statements regarding Judah, for instance, are, in reality, positive.⁹² Moreover, the primary subject of the metaphor in the Balaam texts has been debated: some have argued that the oracles originally referred to God, not to Israel.⁹³ Whatever the case, the images employed in the Balaam texts, especially in Num 23:24, are more developed and comprehensible as is evident from the fact that Balak himself clearly understood their message (Num 23:25; cf. 24:10–11)!

A more certain positive use of the lion image is 2 Sam 1:23 where Saul and Jonathan are said to be mightier than lions. The comparison is probably militaristic. That is also the case with 2 Sam 17:10, which describes valiant warriors who have hearts like the heart of a lion,⁹⁴ and 1 Chr 12:9, which depicts Gadite warriors—skilled with lance and spear—as having the faces of a lion.

Less overtly militaristic, but no less violent, is the image in Micah 5:7, where the remnant of Jacob is said to be among many peoples like a lion among animals in the forest, and like a young lion among sheep which treads down and tears, from which no one can deliver.⁹⁵

⁹² So, e.g., Calum M. Carmichael, “Some Sayings in Genesis 49,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 435–44; especially 438–39; and E. M. Good, “The ‘Blessing’ on Judah, Gen 49:8–12” *JBL* 82 (1963): 427–32. Most commentators, however, disagree, understanding the passage to be laudatory. So, e.g., Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (rev. ed.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 424; Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989/5749), 336; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC 2; Dallas: Word, 1994), 475; Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 228–29; *TDOT* 1:384.

⁹³ See Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 534–55. She deletes עַל in Num 23:24 so that “originally v. 24 gave an answer to the question with which v. 23 ended, ‘What does El do?’...Therefore the original subject of v. 24 must have been El. Through the insertion of the word *למ* the gross theriomorphic language of this old oracle was diverted to the people....This in turn rendered it possible to interpret Num. 24:8f. as an oracle applying to Israel....Gen. 49:9 betrays the relatively late date of the insertion of the blessing of Judah into Gen. 49 in that it appears to know this ‘corrected’ interpretation of Nu. 23:24, applying it to Judah alone.” While this is intriguing and would indicate that the texts in Numbers, at least, should be considered as metaphors referring to God, Korpel’s emendation lacks text-critical support and this, among other things, indicates that her argument remains speculative. Contrast, e.g., W. F. Albright, “The Oracles of Balaam,” *JBL* 63 (1944): 216 n. 53 who thought the insertion of a word (perhaps עַל) was necessitated by the parallelism.

⁹⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, though it is striking, that these lion-hearted warriors melt before David. He has, after all, been known to kill lions in his day!

⁹⁵ Moshé Anbar, “Rosée et ondées ou lion et lionceau (Michée 5,6–7)?,” *BN* 73 (1994): 5–8, takes 5:7 as an interpolation given the tension with 5:6. Jörg Jeremias, “Tau und Löwe (Mi 5,6f),” in *Was ist der Mensch...?: Beiträge zur Anthropologie des Alten Testaments: Hans Walter Wolff zum. 80 Geburtstag* (ed. Frank Crüsemann, Christof Hardmeier, and Rainer Kessler; München: Chr. Kaiser, 1992), 221–27, thinks that the two verses are compatible, despite their antithetical sense.

The righteous are like lions in Prov 28:1. While the exact tenor of the image is somewhat unclear,⁹⁶ the contrast with the wicked who flee even though no one is in pursuit gives some insight into the imagery. Another passage that may liken the faithful to lions is Ps 111:5, which states that Yahweh provides prey for those who fear him. One is reminded of the extended lion metaphor in Nah 2:12–14, where the lion ripped prey for his cubs and lionesses. Analogously, Psalm 111 may portray Yahweh as the lion providing for his lion cubs.⁹⁷ However, depending on the date of the psalm, it may be that the prey (טֶרֶף) in this text is simply a generic reference to food.⁹⁸

While passages that apply the lion image positively to the self or to the righteous are few in number and not without difficulties, they nevertheless provide examples that portray the insider or insider-group as leonine. Yet calling these images “positive” is somewhat misleading. They are positive only in *appropriation*; the *tone* of the metaphorical connection is, in reality, quite negative and violent: these lions rip, trample, fight, frighten, and so forth. It is better not to rouse them! These images are all predicated on the lion’s power. When the lion represents the self or insider-group, therefore, it stands for the strength and ability of the primary subject to act as a lion or succeed in ways akin to the lion—or at least the desire that the subject behave or succeed in such ways. This same desire is probably reflected in the various PNs or titles/designations that are related to the lion. The former may include “Ariel” (אַרְיֵאל; Ezra 8:16)—perhaps also “Areli” (אַרְאֵלִי; Gen 46:16; Num 26:17 [2x])⁹⁹—and “Laish” (לַיִשׁ; 1 Sam 25:44; 2 Sam 3:15).¹⁰⁰ Less likely as a PN is הַאֲרִיָּה in 2 Kgs 15:25 (see above and Appendix 1). In my judgment, הַאֲרִיָּה here is more likely a military designation, “the lion,” and this officer, along with Argob (thus a PN) and Pekah, participated in the *coup d’état* against Pekahiah.¹⁰¹ Whatever the case, the use of the lion in Hebrew PNs likens the bearer, whether realistically or ideally, to a lion.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Note יִבְטָח: are they bold or do they wait/trust?

⁹⁷ Zoologically, it should be noted that males actually have “little direct influence on the raising of young” (Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 143; see further 143–53). Perhaps the image in Ps 111:5, then, if leonine, is actually derived from the *lioness*. The same could hold true for Nahum 2. See further Chapters 5 (§5.4.1) and 6 (§6.3).

⁹⁸ For טֶרֶף in later texts, see Mal 3:10; Prov 31:15; and 30:8 (verb). Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 357 puts Psalm 111 in the postexilic period.

⁹⁹ For both see Excursus 1: Ariel.

¹⁰⁰ Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), 230 and n. 1 also included Sheber (שֶׁבֶר; see 1 Chr 2:48) in this category, comparing Arabic *sabrūn* as well as Jewish Aramaic and Syriac שְׁבִירָא. *HALOT* 4:1406 indicates both derivations are possible but notes that the sense of the PN, regardless, is unclear.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Ezek 38:13, which probably uses כַּפִּיר in a similar way (i.e., as an official designation). Another example may be Isa 21:8 which reads, in MT, וַיִּקְרָא אֲרִיָּה (“the lion called out”). Though the text is frequently emended (note 1QIsa^a reads: הִרְאָה; see the commentaries), the sentry here could be called “the lion.” For the issue of animal

2.3.2. *The Lion as Foe: Negative Projection on the Enemy/Wicked*

If the negative and violent tenor of the lion makes it well suited for self-presentation—assuming that one wants to be so depicted!—then it is also true that that tenor makes it equally (if not more) well suited for describing one's enemy. And, whereas the Hebrew Bible uses the lion as a metaphor for the self or the righteous rather infrequently, the opposite is the case with the lion as a metaphor for the foe. Such use abounds, especially in the Psalms, where it generally stands for one's personal enemies and for the wicked.¹⁰³ And, at many points, especially in the Psalter, these two are one and the same.

In Ps 7:3, the psalmist prays for deliverance from “all my pursuers,” lest they tear and drag away, with none to rescue.¹⁰⁴ In Ps 10:8–9, the wicked (see 10:4) lurk, sitting in ambush and in hiding places in order to seize and kill the poor and innocent. Even the likeness of the wicked is like a lion that longs to tear prey or like a young lion waiting in hiding (Ps 17:12). In Psalm 22, the psalmist's enemies are likened to a number of animals: bulls, dogs, and lions. They open their mouth at—or perhaps “over” (עַלִּי)—the psalmist as a roaring and rending lion (22:14). Later, they seem to do something to the psalmist's hands and feet “like a lion” (22:17),¹⁰⁵ so that finally the psalmist cries “save

names as designations, see Patrick D. Miller, Jr., “Animal Names as Designations in Ugaritic and Hebrew,” *UF* 2 (1970): 177–86. He discusses Ezek 38:13, noting that certainty regarding whether the term refers to “warriors, merchants, or nobleman” cannot be reached (183). He does not include Isa 21:8 in his discussion. Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 39–40 interprets Isa 21:8 as direct discourse. The sentry calls out: “a lion”—“presumably upon seeing such a beast....The translation...‘lion’...in the context...makes good sense, and there is therefore no need to construe it as a personal name, emend it...or construe it as a simile to the effect that the watchman cries out ‘like a lion’” (40).

¹⁰² On the phenomenon, cf. Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen*, 229: “Wir werden Tiernamen als Bilder zu fassen haben, sei es mit konstatierendem Sinne, sei es mit Wunschcharakter, die weniger schmeichelhaften Tiervergleiche in der Regel wohl als Spitznamen.” The same situation is found in Rabbinic literature, where prominent rabbis and scholars are called “lions,” and continues to this day in names like “Leo,” “Aryeh,” and “Ari.”

¹⁰³ See, e.g., Othmar Keel, *Feinde und Gottesleugner: Studien zum Image der Widersacher in den Individualpsalmen* (SBM 7; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969), 201–206; idem, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (repr.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 85–86; Bernd Janowski, “Dem Löwen gleich, gierig nach Raub: Zum Feindbild in den Psalmen,” *EvT* 55 (1995): 155–73.

¹⁰⁴ See Norbert Lohfink, “Ps 7,2–6—vom Löwen gejagt,” in *Die Freude an Gott—unsere Kraft: Festschrift für Otto Bernhard Knoch zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Johannes Joachim Degenhardt, Eleonore Beck, and Eugen Sitarz; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991), 60–67 for an analysis of Ps 7:2–6 as an extended metaphor concerning a hunted lion. Lohfink does not note the imagery in Ps 7:16, which also evokes the lion. On this latter verse, see further below.

¹⁰⁵ כָּאֵרִי is a notorious crux. See the following studies: L. C. Allen, “Cuckoos in the Textual Nest at 2 Kings xx. 13; Isa. xlii. 10; xlix. 24; Ps. xxii.17; 2 Chron. v. 9,” *JTS* 22 (1971): 143–50, especially 148–50; R. Tournay, “Note sur le Psaume XXII 17,” *VT* 23 (1973):

me from the mouth of the lion!” (הושיעני מפי אריה; 22:22), a prayer that is seconded in Ps 35:17 (השיבה נפשי משאיהם מכפירים יחידתי). In Ps 34:11, the impoverished and hungry young lions are a metaphor for the wicked, as J. J. M. Roberts has demonstrated.¹⁰⁶ Living among such enemies is like lying down among lions; they are aflame for human prey with teeth and tongues as sharp as swords or arrows (Ps 57:5).¹⁰⁷ It is no wonder the psalmists pray that God rip out those teeth and break those fangs (Ps 58:7),¹⁰⁸ and that the psalmists bless Yahweh who has not allowed them to be ripped by those teeth (Ps 124:6)! Ps 91:13 promises some relief: the righteous will ride upon the lion and tread on the young lion. Iconographical depictions from ancient Israel/Palestine and the broader ancient Near East (see Chapters 3–4) indicate that this image is one of dominance. When combined with the extensive use of the lion as a metaphor for the wicked¹⁰⁹ the picture is clarified: the righteous will triumph over the unrighteous.

The use of the lion as a metaphor for the enemy is not limited only to the Psalms, however. Eliphaz boasts that the wicked always get their due and does so by likening them to lions—indeed, by using almost every possible Hebrew word for the animal (אריה, שחל, כפירים, ליש, and לבניא [בני])!—whose roar, voice, and teeth are broken, and who perish for lack of prey (Job 4:10–11). Bildad seems to include Job among the lion-like wicked when he accuses Job of tearing (טרף) himself in his anger (Job 18:4).¹¹⁰ Later, a response of sorts is found when Job states that he broke the fangs of the unrighteous, causing them

111–12; J. J. M. Roberts, “A New Root for an Old Crux, Ps. XXII 17c,” *VT* 23 (1973): 247–52; Mitchell Dahood, “The Verb *šmḥ* ‘To Pick Clean’, in Ps. XXII 17,” *VT* 24 (1974): 370–71; Gregory Vall, “Psalm 22:17b: ‘The Old Guess,’” *JBL* 116 (1997): 45–56; and John Kaltner, “Psalm 22:17b: Second Guessing ‘The Old Guess,’” *JBL* 117 (1998): 503–506. The progression of the image outlined above may, along with other considerations, be an argument for retaining the MT of Ps 22:17b, especially if one posits that a verb has dropped out. See Brent A. Strawn, “Psalm 22:17b: More Guessing,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 439–51.

¹⁰⁶ J. J. M. Roberts, “The Young Lions of Psalm 34,11,” *Bib* 54 (1973): 265–67. The lion-image is continued in Ps 34:21 (not discussed by Roberts): Yahweh keeps the righteous so that not one of their bones will be broken (אחת מהנה לא נשברה)—something that lions are known to do.

¹⁰⁷ In an oft-cited article, B. Mazar, “The Military Élite of King David,” *VT* 13 (1963): 310–20, found in this passage an allusion to “mercenaries called *lḥmim*, probably a military corps whose emblem was the lioness-goddess” (312). While Mazar refers to the el-Khadr arrowheads and *KTU* 4.63 III 38 (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 1), there is, in reality, little evidence to support his claim. It is much more likely, given the diffusion of the motif under discussion, that Ps 57:5 is yet another instance of animal imagery being applied to one’s enemies (so also Miller, “Animal Names,” 183–84).

¹⁰⁸ Note the important study of this motif by Jo Ann Hackett and John Huehnergard, “On Breaking Teeth,” *HTR* 77 (1984): 259–75.

¹⁰⁹ Pss 71:11; 94:13 may also portray the wicked as lions that hunt or are hunted, respectively.

¹¹⁰ At the very least, Bildad’s speech is probably to be understood as a response to Job 16:9, where Job had likened God to a lion that had ripped him in his wrath. See further below.

to drop their prey (Job 29:17). Job ought not to be considered one of these unrighteous lions, because he himself has hunted them!

Other passages also contain the image of the lion as wicked enemy: Prov 28:15, for example, states that a wicked ruler is a roaring lion. Zech 11:16, in its evocation of lion imagery, may flesh this out with its discussion of a shepherd that cares nothing for the needy. Instead, he will devour, rending even the hooves of his prey. The last point is rather significant given the fact that lions typically leave the hooves of their prey uneaten.¹¹¹ In short, the shepherd of Zech 11:16 is doubly bad: instead of being a shepherd who protects the flock from predators like lions, he is leonine himself and, still further, is worse than the typical lion—leaving nothing left of his prey (presumably the people; cf. Zech 11:10).¹¹²

The lion as a metaphor for the enemy can also be applied to larger complexes, especially to nations. This usage is especially common in the prophets.¹¹³ The nations discussed there are sometimes identified or can be identified with some degree of certainty. Isa 5:29–30, while not mentioning the nation by name, most certainly uses lion imagery with reference to Assyria, which is depicted as a lion roaring, growling, and seizing prey with no one to deliver. Peter Machinist has argued that this text might even be a reflex of Assyrian propaganda.¹¹⁴ Similarly, Jer 2:15 probably also alludes to Assyria in its description of lions that roar against, or over, Israel. While that identification may be debated,¹¹⁵ there is no doubt that Nahum uses the lion as a metaphor for Assyria—specifically, Nineveh—in Nah 2:12–3:1.¹¹⁶ He calls the city a lion's den (2:12), a city of bloodshed (3:1), where once lions walked with no one to disturb them. That is no longer the case, however, as the city is now opposed by Yahweh of Hosts with devastating consequences. Ironically, the young lions will be devoured by the sword, and, even should some survive, Yahweh promises to eliminate their prey from the land thus securing their extinction.

¹¹¹ See Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 271.

¹¹² Additional passages that may also evoke the lion as an image for the wicked/enemy include Job 18:8; Micah 7:2; and Prov 30:14.

¹¹³ See the study by Rüdiger Liwak, "Die altorientalischen Großmächte in der Metaphorik der Prophetie," in *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel: Festschrift für Siegfried Herrmann zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Rüdiger Liwak and Siegfried Wagner; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1991), 206–30.

¹¹⁴ See Peter Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 719–37; especially 728–29.

¹¹⁵ Holladay, *Jeremiah* 1, 93, e.g., takes the lions to refer to Babylon (so also Wünsche, *Die Bildersprache*, 64). Contrast John Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB 21; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 14, who is more typical: "Reference is presumably to the nation's long oppression by Assyria."

¹¹⁶ See Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image," 735–36 on Nah 2:12–14. Cf. also J. Daryl Charles, "Plundering the Lion's Den—A Portrait of Divine Fury (Nahum 2:3–11)," *Grace Theological Journal* 10 (1989): 183–201.

Lion metaphors are applied to other nations beyond Assyria as well. Jer 51:38 probably alludes to Babylon.¹¹⁷ Jer 50:17 states that Israel is a hunted sheep, driven by lions who are revealed to be the kings of Assyria and Babylon, who ate it and who gnawed its leftover bones, respectively. Ezek 32:2–3 applies lion imagery to Pharaoh, king of Egypt,¹¹⁸ while Ezek 38:13 refers to the young lions (see above and Appendix 1) of Tarshish.

At other times, the foe goes unspecified, though the context makes clear that a nation of some sort is intended.¹¹⁹ The foe from the north is a lion that has left its thicket, a destroyer of nations that has left its place to destroy Judah (Jer 4:7). The unidentified invader of Joel 1:6 has the teeth and fangs of a lion. In Ps 74:4, God's enemies roar "in the midst of your appointed place" (בְּקֶרֶב מוֹעֵדָךְ), setting up their signs there—probably a reference to the humiliation of Jerusalem and its temple after 587.¹²⁰

But, as the prophets were quick to point out, the enemy is often within. Hence, the lion is also used as a metaphor describing the wicked behavior of Israel, Judah, or Jerusalem. Such is the case with Jer 12:8, where Yahweh's heritage is like a lion roaring against him.¹²¹ Nowhere is this image more developed than in Ezek 19:2–9, which describes the nation and/or the royal house as a lioness raising cubs into young lions able to hunt prey for themselves. This text will be discussed in greater detail below (§2.3.3); the point here is that the presentation of these figures as lions is negative in force.¹²² Ezek 22:25 describes the princes (<אֲשֶׁר נְשִׂאֵיהֶ>)¹²³ of Judah as a

¹¹⁷ Cf. the leonine reference to Nebuchadnezzar in Jer 51:34. The leonine beast of Dan 7:4 probably also applies to Babylon, though the creature is clearly composite (*Mischwesen*). But see U. Worschech, "Der assyrisch-babylonische Löwenmensch und der 'menschliche' Löwe aus Daniel 7,4," in *Ad bene et fideliter seminandum: Festgabe für Karlheinz Deller zum 21. Februar 1987* (ed. Gerlinde Mauer and Ursula Magen; AOAT 220; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), 321–33.

¹¹⁸ Note the combination with sea-dragon imagery. See the excellent study by Theodore J. Lewis, "CT 13.33–34 and Ezekiel 32: Lion-Dragon Myths," *JAOS* 116 (1996): 28–47.

¹¹⁹ Liwak, "Die altorientalischen Großmächte," 209 has made the interesting observation that when the prophets speak metaphorically of the nations, it is only rarely of the Persians, only sometimes of the Egyptians, more frequently of the Assyrians and Babylonians, but most often of an unidentified people. Perhaps Ps 9:16 should be added to the texts discussed here as it may evoke lion imagery in connection with the nations.

¹²⁰ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 97.

¹²¹ Note, however, Klaus Seybold, "Der 'Löwe' von Jeremia XII 8," *VT* 34 (1986): 93–104, who, by repointing, eliminates the reference to the lion altogether, reading, instead, *k^oluryā* "like a cattle stall." Most commentators accept the lion image (Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 357; Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 184; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 387, who notes, comparing Amos 1:2, that Israel here "has taken on the prerogatives of Yahweh against Yahweh, and this Yahweh cannot accept").

¹²² It is, after all, a *qinah*. See Kottsieper, "Was ist deine Mutter?," 444–461; and Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 393, 396–97 (though he interprets some elements of the imagery as not overtly negative). A major exception to the negative

roaring lion, ripping prey, and devouring life. This sentiment is echoed in Zeph 3:3 where the princes of Jerusalem are portrayed as roaring lions.¹²⁴

Several of these latter texts employ the lion as a metaphor for the monarch or royal figure—the next major subtype to be discussed. Before leaving the lion as either positive or negative image, however, a special combination of these images should be noted. There are a number of psalms (Pss 7:16; 25:15; 31:5; 35:7–8; 57:7) that evoke lion imagery by use of particular terminology characteristic of the lion but that do so in a manner that seems to have a double signification. On the one hand, the wicked hunt the psalmist using the tools of the lion hunt (e.g., Pss 7:16; 31:5; 35:7; 57:7). Such a presentation metaphorizes the psalmist as the (hunted) lion. And yet, the psalmist escapes; the wicked, instead, fall into their own traps! This twist switches the primary subject of the metaphor: now the wicked who had earlier hunted the righteous (lion) are now revealed as the true lions—themselves trapped. This double use of the lion image is rare and occurs only in passages that *evoke* lion imagery—that is, not in verses where one of the primary lion-terms is explicitly used.¹²⁵ Perhaps, then, the lion image is secondary and the dominant metaphorical vehicle is simply the hunt.¹²⁶ On the other hand, these passages might be understood as cases of double entendre; perhaps they should be termed Janus-faced metaphors. In them, *both* the righteous and the wicked are portrayed as lions, but the former escape the trap, while the latter succumb. Both the success of the righteous and the defeat of the wicked are thus nicely demonstrated.

This double entendre or double signification leads directly into a discussion of the lion as a metaphor and image used with the Monarch/Mighty One and with the Deity, as the positive and negative are also found mixed with both referents.

2.3.3. Royal Lions: The Lion and the Monarch/Mighty One

As was stated above, it is surprising, given the long tradition of associating the monarch with a ferocious lion throughout the ancient Near East, especially in battle contexts (see Chapter 4 §4.3), that this motif is found rather infrequently in the Hebrew Bible. There are a number of texts that draw a general

interpretation is William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19* (WBC 28; Waco: Word, 1986), 293–305. See further below.

¹²³ The emendation follows the LXX. See further Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 465 n. 25a and Appendix 3.

¹²⁴ For the irony of applying such imagery internally, see J. J. M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 213. Additionally, note Jer 21:13 (of Jerusalem). On Ezek 12:13 and 17:20, both of which discuss the Judean king, see further below.

¹²⁵ But note the contexts of Psalms 7, 35, and 57, which do contain such references: אֲרִיָּה (Ps 7:3), כַּפִּיר (35:17), לִבִּיא (57:5).

¹²⁶ See Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 89–95 on hunting imagery applied to enemies of the individual. Of course, animals other than just lions were caught using such means.

connection between the king and a lion. These include the proverbial statements about the monarch's rage or terror being like the growling of a young lion, so that it is best not to provoke such a person (Prov 20:2; cf. also Prov 19:12; 28:15).¹²⁷ There are also texts that liken foreign kings to lions: Pharaoh in Ezek 32:2–3; the kings of Assyria and Babylon in Jer 50:17.¹²⁸

Even so, there are surprisingly few references to *Israelite* monarchs as lions. 2 Sam 1:23 states that Saul and Jonathan were mightier than lions, but as Jonathan never ascended the throne it is likely that this image is a generic metaphor for strength rather than a specific, developed metaphor for royalty. 1 Samuel 17 recounts David's exploits against the lion, and by killing the lion here he behaves quite akin to his ancient Near Eastern counterparts. This text is treated in greater detail in Chapter 5, but even here it must be noted that, according to 1 Samuel 17, David killed *both* lion *and* bear and that this was done during the course of his normal shepherding duties—in other words, *prior* to his kingship.¹²⁹

The remaining texts that use the lion with the monarch are few and non-specific.¹³⁰ For instance, Ezek 12:13 and 17:20 seem to image the Judean king as a lion hunted by Yahweh. The lion imagery here is implicit, however, and not highly developed. The same could be said of Zech 11:16 with its depiction of a shepherd (probably a royal figure) as lion-like.¹³¹ The force of the lion image in these three passages is negative.

This leaves only the extended metaphor of the lioness and her cubs in Ezek 19:2–9. The exact referents of the metaphor have been debated. Some have taken the lioness to be Judah as a whole or its dynastic house.¹³² Others have argued that the lioness refers to a specific individual—namely, the queen

¹²⁷ Note also Prov 30:29–31, which includes the lion and the king in a series of entities that are “stately in stride and gait.”

¹²⁸ Cf. also Jer 51:34, which uses lion imagery in connection with Nebuchadnezzar, and Dan 7:4, which depicts the beast (probably) representing Babylon as partly leonine.

¹²⁹ Note, however, David's anointing, which takes place in 1 Samuel 16, as well as the deep connections between shepherding and kingship throughout the Near East. On the latter, see G. Johannes Botterweck, “Hirt und Herde im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient,” in *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter und Stände: Festgabe seiner Eminenz dem hochwürdigsten Herrn Joseph Kardinal Frings Erzbischof von Köln zum goldenen Priesterjubiläum am 10. August 1960 dargeboten* (ed. Wilhelm Corsten, Augustinus Frotz, and Peter Linden; Köln: J. P. Bachem, 1960), 339–52, especially 344–50; and Jack W. Vancil, “Sheep, Shepherd,” *ABD* 5:1187–90.

¹³⁰ One might also cf. 1 Kgs 10:19–20//2 Chr 9:18–19, which associate the lion with the king as an architectural element of the royal throne (see below).

¹³¹ See above. Perhaps, given the parallelism with “shepherds,” the lions of Zech 11:3 should also be seen as royal figures.

¹³² E.g., Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 394; Martin Noth, “The Jerusalem Catastrophe of 587 B.C., and Its Significance for Israel,” in idem, *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 273; Moshe Greenberg, “Notes on the Influence of Tradition on Ezekiel,” *JANES* 22 (1993): 29–37, especially 30; *TDOT* 1:385; Botterweck, “Gott und Mensch,” 122.

mother Hamutal.¹³³ Both predications, but especially the latter, are made on the basis of the description of the lioness' two cubs, who are said to grow into young lions but then suffer similar fates: the first is caught and taken to Egypt (19:3–4); the second, described in much worse terms (19:7), is caught and taken to Babylon (19:5–9). The references to deportation are such that the metaphorical nature of these lions is obvious. Moreover, these references seem to describe—especially in the case of the first lion—the historical deportations of specific Judean kings in the last years of Judah's existence.¹³⁴ The first lion is almost certainly Jehoahaz who was taken to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco (2 Kgs 23:31–34).¹³⁵ Scholars are divided over the identity of the second lion, however. Jehoiakim was *not* the son of Hamutal and was *not* deported into exile.¹³⁶ Zedekiah *was* a son of Hamutal and *was* deported to Babylon.¹³⁷ Jehoiachin is yet a third option.¹³⁸ Such variation, and the lack of textual clarity that begets it, is what has led some to argue that the lioness is not Hamutal, but rather a theriomorphic image for the Davidic house or Judah as a whole. A fuller analysis of this text must await Chapter 5 (§5.3.1). It is imperative to underscore, however, that this is *the only text in the Hebrew Bible* where the lion image is used metaphorically of Israelite kings (and perhaps also the queen mother) in a highly-developed and militaristic way akin to what is found in the ancient Near East. But even here the tone of the metaphor is markedly different. It does not boast in this imagery, as, for instance, Seti I who is celebrated as a “wild looking lion, who treads upon the inaccessible ways of every land.”¹³⁹ Instead, the tone is “grim.”¹⁴⁰ To be sure, the young lions of Ezekiel 19 behave, at least at first, as one might expect: they catch prey (19:3, 6). But they also do more and do worse—they devour human life (19:3, 6). The second lion, in particular, is even worse: this lion rapes widows and destroys cities. Zimmerli may be correct in his assessment that this violent activity is purely metaphorical and, as such, appropriate to and expected of kings in the

¹³³ E.g., Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 254. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 297 has opted for an intermediate position. He thinks that originally Ezek 19:1–9 referred to the nation with its young lions as Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Only later was the song revised by the prophet so that the mother became Hamutal and the young lions became Jehoahaz and Zedekiah. Cf. also Kottsieper's (“Was ist deine Mutter?,” 444–61) redactional argument (see above).

¹³⁴ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 393: “in both cases [יְהוֹאָחָז] implies a real deportation.”

¹³⁵ An exception is Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 297, given his redactional approach to the unit. See above.

¹³⁶ Scholars advocating Jehoiakim as the second lion include Noth, “The Jerusalem Catastrophe,” 273.

¹³⁷ Scholars advocating Zedekiah as the second lion include: Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 254 (nb!); Kottsieper, “Was ist deine Mutter?,” 444–61; Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 297.

¹³⁸ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 395–96. So also Wünsche, *Die Bildersprache*, 58; TDOT 1:385; Botterweck, “Gott und Mensch,” 122–23.

¹³⁹ TDOT 1:378.

¹⁴⁰ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 393.

ancient Near East.¹⁴¹ The negative tenor of the metaphor is nevertheless obvious for several reasons. Preeminent among these are the facts that: 1) the unit is called a dirge (קִינָה; 19:1, 14); 2) the land and all in it are appalled at the second lion (19:7); and 3) the nations have to intervene and do so by capturing these lions and by deporting them.¹⁴²

If the subtype considered here is broadened a bit to include royal figures in general as well as mighty persons who lived prior to, but also during and even after, the monarchy, additional texts could be mentioned. Jerusalem's princes are lions in Zeph 3:3. Though the exact meaning of the final clause of the verse is uncertain, most commentators have understood the metaphor to be negative. Ezek 22:25 is similar in tone and, if the emendation to נְשִׂאִיהָ is correct, in referent as well.

Apart from this, the Hebrew Bible knows only of mighty individuals or warriors who are likened unto lions—for instance, 2 Sam 17:10 (valiant warriors) and 1 Chr 12:9 (Gadite warriors), both of which were discussed above. Additionally, there are the three individuals who kill lions: Samson (Judges 14), David (1 Samuel 17), and Benaiah (2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22). While the lions in these stories are best understood as real (see above), their conquest is nevertheless testimony—perhaps metaphorical in nature—to the might of these persons. Indeed, the strength of Samson was legendary (Judg 16:17), as was David's prowess in battle (2 Sam 17:10; cf. 1 Sam 18:7). Benaiah, too, is presented in terms that are equally remarkable. He struck two *br(y)ll* of Moab, killed an Egyptian, *and* killed a lion. The last-mentioned feat recalls those of Samson and David, while the encounter with the Egyptian (2 Sam 23:21) is similar to David's with Goliath.

Perhaps one should also add here the triumph of Daniel over the lions (Daniel 6), though the victory there is of quite another sort.¹⁴³ One might also include the use of lion-terms as designations—especially militaristic ones.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 394. It should be noted that Zimmerli emends the MT of Ezek 19:7a to read “And he ‘did evil’ to their ‘palaces’ (?)” He also states that the violent imagery of 19:5–9 “should not be interpreted historically and concretely of Jehoiachin's actions, but [instead] simply serve[s] to elaborate pictorially his awesome royal majesty” (ibid., 395, see also 396). One still wonders if the emendations justify his excusal of the imagery as unproblematic.

¹⁴² Kottsieper, “Was ist deine Mutter?,” speaks of the nature of the passage as a warning (to Zedekiah). Greenberg, “Notes on the Influence of Tradition on Ezekiel,” 32 thinks Ezekiel subverted any positive associations of the lion and compares the same phenomenon in Zeph 3:3 and Nahum 2: “Though the horrible acts of the lions are described as similar to those of the heroic lions, that Ezekiel intended the lion here to be a perjorative figure is suggested by his similar language when, in 22:25, he describes the kings of the ‘bloody city’ Jerusalem.”

¹⁴³ Though it should be noted that both Daniel and David's triumphs are ascribed to God (1 Sam 17:37; Dan 6:23, 28).

¹⁴⁴ Used, perhaps, in 2 Kgs 15:25; Isa 21:8; Ezek 38:13; see above. This usage is also found in later Greek literature, though *λέων* is first attested as a military term only in the Byzantine period (see *TDNT* 4:251 n. 2).

Such designations, like the use of lion-terms as PNs, seem to express the desire that the bearer be (or is) leonine in some attribute, presumably a martial one. Yet, whatever the case, the use of the lion as a metaphor for the monarch is, to repeat, fairly infrequent—at least comparatively speaking (see Chapter 4 §4.3.2)—and is rounded out only slightly when the mighty one is generously included in the category. Both, however, pale in significance in comparison with the widespread use of the lion as a metaphor for the divine.

2.3.4. *Lion Divine: Lions and the Deity*

The Deity is frequently compared to a lion in the Hebrew Bible—indeed, as already stated, this is the case more so than with any other animal. This use is of two basic subtypes: those instances where the metaphor is used in a negative, threatening sense and those where the image *may* be used in a positive sense.

The negative sense dominates and is found principally in the prophets. Instances outside the prophetic corpus include Job, who accuses God of hunting him like a lion (Job 10:16). Later, this image is echoed when Job states that his “adversary” (God) has, among other things, torn him (Job 16:9). The image of God as a lion that hunts, tears, and devours its victim is in fact the most frequently encountered metaphorical use of the lion image with God.

At times, the emphasis of the metaphor seems to center on the lion’s hunting abilities. Jer 49:19 and 50:44 use this to great effect, applying the image as a metaphor for God’s punishment of Edom and Babylon, respectively. Like a lion going up from the thickets of the Jordan to hunt in the pasture (grasslands?), Yahweh will single out the finest prey.¹⁴⁵ Who, indeed, is the shepherd that can stand before such a lion? When Yahweh leaves his covert like a young lion, the results are automatic: the land becomes desolate (Jer 25:38).

Such passages demonstrate the severity of the lion metaphor. Hence, a passage like Lam 3:10, which states that God is a lion in hiding, take on increased significance, and the threat that is implicit in, as well as the fear that is evoked by, such an image is magnified. The same is true of Hos 13:7, where Yahweh promises to be like a fierce lion to Ephraim and to lurk on the way like a leopard. The next verse underscores yet again the success of the divine lion when it hunts: God will fall upon them like a bear robbed of young, tear open the covering of their heart, devour them like a lion, rip them open like a wild beast (Hos 13:8).¹⁴⁶ The victim stands no chance of survival. Hos 5:14 graphically illustrates this: Yahweh is like a lion to Ephraim and like a young lion to the house of Judah. He promises to rip and depart, carrying off the prey

¹⁴⁵ See the commentators for the text, and, for the emendations presupposed here, see William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26–52* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 371 nn. 19a, 19b.

¹⁴⁶ Note the mixing of several different animal metaphors. See further Chapter 5 (§5.4.3).

with none to deliver. In Ps 50:22, Yahweh warns the wicked that the same fate awaits them unless they change their ways.

Job 10:16 and 16:9 demonstrate that God's victims know, not only when they have been hunted, but also when they have been caught by this lion. Hezekiah complains that Yahweh has broken all his bones, just like a lion (Isa 38:13).¹⁴⁷ One might compare Lam 3:4 which makes the same complaint, whereas Hos 6:1 finds Israel hoping that Yahweh will heal them since they realize that Yahweh was the one who has torn them.¹⁴⁸

The lion is also metaphorically applied to Yahweh by means of the lion's roar. In Isa 31:4, Yahweh's activity *vis-à-vis* Zion is like the lion and the young lion roaring (יִהְיֶה)¹⁴⁹ over its prey. In Jer 25:30, Yahweh roars from on high (מִמְרוֹם)¹⁵⁰ and utters his voice from his holy habitation; the explicit reference to Yahweh as a lion in Jer 25:38 leaves no doubt that the image is leonine. Amos 1:2 uses highly similar language and may be the inspiration for the Jeremian text. The result of Yahweh's roar in Amos is the withering of nature.

Other passages deserve mention: Amos 3:8, for instance, puts the roaring of the lion, which causes all to fear, in parallel with the speaking of Yahweh, which causes one to prophesy. The roaring of God's voice in Job 37:2 and 37:4 may be the roaring of a lion, though these texts also have connections to the theophanic tradition of the thunderstorm. But then again, Amos 1:2 and Joel 4:16 also have connections to that tradition, so perhaps the two should not be too quickly differentiated. Certainly the divine warrior could take a number of different forms.¹⁵¹ It may not be insignificant in this connection to note that

¹⁴⁷ For the possibility that the MT originally had Hezekiah "roaring" (שָׁאָה) his complaint, see Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39*, 684–85 and n. 24. While this seems unlikely—it is based largely on the Targum (Oswalt himself does not adopt it)—it would be a fascinating double use of the lion image: Hezekiah would be a lion bested by the divine lion Yahweh. One thinks of battles between real male lions for dominance of the pride (see Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 130–32, 135–37, 353; but note his cautions). Still, even if the text originally read שָׁאָה, it should be remembered that the root שָׁאָה is sometimes used of human vocalizations of persons in distress (e.g., Pss 32:3; 38:9; Job 3:24).

¹⁴⁸ See Dennis T. Olson, "The Lion, the Itch and the Wardrobe: Hosea 5:8–6:6 as a Case Study in the Contemporary Interpretation and Authority of Scripture," *CurTM* 23 (1996): 173–84, especially 178–79, for an argument that this desire for healing is disingenuous.

¹⁴⁹ The use of this term is somewhat odd and unexpected, but cf. Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 103–15 for the range of different leonine vocalizations.

¹⁵⁰ Commentators are divided over whether this refers to heaven or whether Yahweh is still pictured in Jerusalem. McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:648 opts for the former as does Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 519; and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 678–79. Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 374 opt for the latter. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 507 thinks both the heavenly and earthly sanctuaries are implied (so also LXX), a possibility that Holladay admits, but thinks not ideal (*Jeremiah 1*, 679–80).

¹⁵¹ See Patrick D. Miller, Jr., *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (HSM 5; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), especially 171–75; and Theodore Hiebert, "Warrior, Divine," *ABD* 6:876–80. See further Chapter 5.

Yahweh's dwelling place is often referred to with terms that are also used of the lion's lair. Note, for example, מַעֲנֵה and סֶךְ in Ps 76:3. It is possible that such terms are generic, without explicit or implicit leonine connections. Still, the reference to "mountains of prey" (מִהַרְרֵי טֶרֶף) in Ps 76:5—if understood correctly—should not be missed. In fact, W. A. M. Beuken has argued that the lion metaphor is quite extended and developed throughout most of Psalm 76.¹⁵²

Additionally, Yahweh may lurk behind the lions of many of the passages discussed above under other rubrics, including the naturalistic. James K. Mead, for example, has argued that the rhetorical structure of 1 Kings 13 leads one to the conclusion that God is the lion that kills the man of God.¹⁵³ Given the frequent association of the lion with Yahweh, especially in Amos, one could also see in the destructive lion of Amos 3:12 another metaphorical—but veiled—reference to Yahweh.¹⁵⁴

The examples discussed thus far have been overwhelmingly threatening in tone. Yahweh is a lion that hunts, captures prey, rips it apart, and devours it; and is a lion who roars, striking fear into the next victim. There are three texts, however, that have been frequently understood as utilizing the lion metaphor in a positive sense. Such positive usage, especially in light of the widespread use of the lion as a metaphor for Yahweh with destructive implications, is unexpected. Consequently, these texts deserve greater attention so as to determine whether or not this is really the case, and, if so, what significance pertains.

The first text is Joel 4:16, which states that Yahweh roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem. This phraseology is virtually identical to Amos 1:2 (cf. also Jer 25:30).¹⁵⁵ The effect in both texts is also similar: in Amos 1:2

¹⁵² W. A. M. Beuken, "God's Presence in Salem: A Study of Psalm 76," in *Loven en Geloven* (ed. J. Ridderbos and A. Ridderbos-Boersma; Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Ton Bolland, 1975), 135–50.

¹⁵³ James K. Mead, "Kings and Prophets, Donkeys and Lions: Dramatic Shape and Deuteronomistic Rhetoric in 1 Kings XIII," *VT* 49 (1999): 191–205. Connections between the man of God and Jeroboam have also been noted by Robert L. Cohn, "Literary Technique in the Jeroboam Narrative," *ZAW* 97 (1985): 23–35.

¹⁵⁴ See D. Matthew Stith, "Whose Lion Is It Anyway?: The Identity of the Lion in Amos 3:12," *Koinonia* 11 (1999): 103–18. Stith also discusses Assyria and, his own option, Israel's rulers, as "being" the lion. In my judgment, Yahweh is probably the best candidate for the lion, especially given the close proximity to 3:8. However, the metaphor itself does not require that each element be assigned to a specific referent (as pointed out to me by James F. Armstrong). Regardless, Helga Weippert has noted the irony in the image of Amos 3:12 given the tradition of apotropaic lion-images in northern Israel as evidenced, for example, in the Samaria ivories ("Amos: Seine Bilder und ihr Milieu," in Helga Weippert, Klaus Seybold, and Manfred Weippert, *Beiträge zur prophetischen Bildsprache in Israel und Assyrien* [OBO 64; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1985], 1–29, especially 15–18, 25).

¹⁵⁵ The only difference from Amos 1:2 is the initial *waw*. Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 81 thinks that Joel 4:16 "is best explained if Joel is citing

the pastures wither and the top of Mt. Carmel dries up; in Joel 4:16a the heavens and earth quake. However, the Joel text continues: “But Yahweh is a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the children of Israel.” This latter part portrays Yahweh in positive fashion, as a place of security (מחסה, מעוז) for Israel. But the first part of the verse, which contains the lion image, seems to continue to draw from the tradition of the lion as an image of threat, power, and fear. The heavens and earth, after all, “quake” (ורעשו) at Yahweh’s roar. It is, therefore, an oracle “turned against the nations.”¹⁵⁶ The threat posed by the divine lion Yahweh is still operative, that is, but is oriented *externally*, instead of internally as in Amos 1:2. Still, the threat of the lion ought not be forgotten by Israel either.¹⁵⁷

This same dynamic, and more, is at work in the second text, Isa 31:4. This text, when combined with 31:5, has been a long-standing crux. Scholars have been divided, with many opting for a positive interpretation of 31:4. These have argued that, especially in the light of 31:5, the image is one of a lion protecting its prey from shepherds.¹⁵⁸ Others have argued that the image can hardly be positive as a lion does not protect its prey from shepherds with any other purpose than to devour it! Moreover, the meaning of the syntagma צבא + על is always “to fight *against*,” though it must be admitted that the number of attestations are few in number (Num 31:7; Isa 29:7, 8; Zech 14:12).¹⁵⁹ Yet even those who have interpreted 31:4 negatively have, for the most part, admitted that in its present form the oracle must be understood positively.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, there can be little doubt that the final form of the oracle is what has led so many to argue for a positive interpretation of 31:4.¹⁶¹ There are, however, a few exceptions to this positive assessment. One example is R. E. Clements who has argued that 31:5, 8–9 are later, redactional insertions from the time of

Am 1:2 verbatim.” Similarly, Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 120. James L. Crenshaw, *Joel* (AB 24C; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 193 thinks Joel and Amos took the sentence from earlier tradition.

¹⁵⁶ Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 81, who says the same holds true for Jer 25:30. Similarly, Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, 120.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, 121, and see further below.

¹⁵⁸ E.g., Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 316; Hans Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39* (BKAT 10/3; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 1240–42; Koenen, “Süßes geht vom Starken aus,” especially 192–95, 182–83.

¹⁵⁹ Still, note that the adversative sense seems to also be reflected in the LXX (ἐπιστρατεύω ἐπὶ) as over against the Vulgate (*exercituum ut proelietur super*), which seems to provide a positive interpretation. See Koenen, “Süßes geht vom Starken aus,” 192 nn. 88 and 91.

¹⁶⁰ Cf., e.g., J. Cheryl Exum, “Of Broken Pots, Fluttering Birds and Visions in the Night: Extended Simile and Poetic Technique in Isaiah,” *CBQ* 43 (1981): 331–52, especially 336–38; Göran Eidevall, “Lions and Birds as Literature: Some Notes on Isaiah 31 and Hosea 11,” *SJOT* 7 (1993): 78–87.

¹⁶¹ Exum, “Of Broken Pots,” 337 thinks Isa 31:4–5 is an example of diaphor—the creation of new meaning by juxtaposition or synthesis of metaphors.

Josiah, which alter the originally negative meaning of 31:4.¹⁶² Another example is Michael Barré, who has attempted to argue that even 31:5a was originally negative in intent—given his understanding of נֶגַע + עַל, especially in Syriac.¹⁶³ Elsewhere, Michael T. Davis and I have argued for a negative interpretation of 31:4, especially in the light of lion iconography in the ancient Near East.¹⁶⁴ There, we advocated that the best way to understand the present form of the unit was also via redaction, but not along the lines of scholars such as Clements. Instead, utilizing the work of William L. Holladay and J. J. M. Roberts, we posited that Isa 31:4–5 may belong to the category of self-extended or reworked oracles—oracles that indicate that the prophet himself reused earlier material, redacting it for use in a different context.¹⁶⁵ If this is the case, the prophet has taken an originally negative oracle (31:4) and altered it, reworking it into an oracle of promise and hope (note especially 31:5b). This explanation accounts for the negative force of 31:4 while granting the positive thrust of 31:5ff. However, the possibility that this combination was done by the prophet himself, from his earlier material, has a further implication: it indicates that the originally negative metaphor has not been completely obviated. It is still at work, even if only slightly, in the background of the image. The audience, that is, has heard about this lion before; they ought to take care—perhaps it might turn on them again.¹⁶⁶ Even in Isa 31:4, then, the lion image,

¹⁶² R. E. Clements, *Isaiah 1–39* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 256–59. See also B. S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (SBT; London: SCM, 1967), 58–59.

¹⁶³ Michael L. Barré, “Of Lions and Birds: A Note on Isaiah 31:4–5,” in *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings* (ed. Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 144; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 55–59. He thinks 31:5a “evokes the picture of carrion birds swooping down and lighting upon their prey” (58). (On this image in this text see also Othmar Keel, “Erwägungen zum Sitz im Leben des Pascha,” *ZAW* 84 [1972]: 414–34, especially 429–30, who thinks the image of Isa 31:4 is positive.) In Barré’s opinion, it is only the last four words of 31:5b that change the meaning and, on the editorial phenomenon, he instructively compares the Babylonian *ʾālu*-commentaries (59 and n. 3).

¹⁶⁴ Michael T. Davis and Brent A. Strawn, “Isaiah 31:4–5 in the Light of Lion Iconography of the Ancient Near East” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 1996). On the iconography, see further Chapters 3–4 of the present work.

¹⁶⁵ See, e.g., J. J. M. Roberts, “Isaiah and His Children,” in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (ed. Ann Kort and Scott Morschauser; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 193–203; and William L. Holladay, *Isaiah: Scroll of a Prophetic Heritage* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1978), 59–60, 84. Roberts himself thinks (private communication) that the peculiar combination of the lion and bird images is reflective of the strange work of Yahweh (see Isa 28:21). I thank Professor Roberts for discussions on this text.

¹⁶⁶ Davis and Strawn, “Isaiah 31:4–5,” 12. Cf. Hos 5:14 with 6:1 and note that the same dynamic may be at work in Joel 4:16 (see above). It should be stated that such a dynamic is operative in Isa 31:4–5 even if the oracle was not reworked by the prophet himself. That is, any one could rework the oracle with similar effect as long as 31:4 is reused, earlier material.

while functioning positively in its present context, probably did not do so originally; nor does it do so unambiguously now. The threatening lion still lurks behind the image. Indeed, it may be the long-standing tradition of using lions in apotropaic contexts that permitted the negative lion image of 31:4 to be reused in the positive context of 31:5ff.¹⁶⁷ If so, it should be noted that the lion poses no less threat in these apotropaic contexts; instead, it becomes a matter of deciding whom or what the lion is protecting (those inside the lion's space) and whom or what the lion threatens (those outside the lion's space).¹⁶⁸

This leaves only Hos 11:10 as a possible instance of an unambiguously positive use of the lion image. The text states that Israel/Ephraim (cf. Hos 11:1, 3, 8–9) will go after Yahweh who roars like a lion. When Yahweh roars, children come trembling from the west. This trembling is described as that of birds from Egypt and doves from Assyria. Most scholars have treated this verse as a later gloss or secondary insertion.¹⁶⁹ The arguments for such a position include: it is only in this verse that Yahweh is spoken of in the third person; the connection with the bird image seems awkward; elsewhere, Hosea uses שָׁחַל or כָּפִיר, not אָרִיָּה; and Hosea does not use the verb נָשָׂא.¹⁷⁰ But, regardless of the compositional status of the oracle, the force of the metaphor is what is of interest here. Is it really positive? Is it, in fact, a thoroughly different understanding of the lion than we have seen elsewhere, especially in Hosea?¹⁷¹ On the one hand, the answer to such questions seems affirmative: Hosea 11 as a whole is concerned with God's compassion and love for Israel/Ephraim (see 11:1, 3–4, 8–9, 11b), yet not without hints of judgment (11:5–7). These observations, too, could be evidence of literary seams. Regardless of that, it is clear that much hinges on the interpretation of the verb חָרַד. The form used in Hos 11:10 (וַיִּחָרְדוּ) is also found in Gen 42:28, 1 Sam 16:4, and 1 Kgs 1:49. In each case, the context is one of great fear. Persons who tremble are *afraid*—generally of someone who is more powerful than them (Gen 42:28), who may not come in peace (1 Sam 16:4), and who might even kill them (1 Kgs 1:49; see 1:50–51!). The same is true of the forms without *waw*¹⁷² and, indeed, of the use of חָרַד in general.¹⁷³ The children come at Yahweh's roar, then, but the

¹⁶⁷ See Davis and Strawn, "Isaiah 31:4–5," and further Chapters 3–4. So also Koenen, "Süßes geht vom Starken aus," 195–96.

¹⁶⁸ Davis and Strawn, "Isaiah 31:4–5"; Koenen, "Süßes geht vom Starken aus," 195–96.

¹⁶⁹ So, e.g., K. Elliger in *BHS*; Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 193, 195, 203; Seifert, *Metaphorisches Reden von Gott*, 218.

¹⁷⁰ Seifert, *Metaphorisches Reden von Gott*, 218; cf. Wolff, *Hosea*, 194–95.

¹⁷¹ So Eidevall, "Lions and Birds as Literature, 83–84; Olson, "The Lion, the Itch and the Wardrobe," 181; Koenen, "Süßes geht vom Starken aus," 190–91.

¹⁷² וַיִּחָרְדוּ Hos 11:11; Isa 41:5 (// יִרָא); Ezek 26:18; Amos 3:6.

¹⁷³ See, e.g., Exod 19:16, Judg 7:3; 8:12; 1 Sam 13:7; 14:5; 21:2; 28:5; Ezra 9:4; 10:3; Isa 10:29; 19:16; 32:11; 66:2, 5; Ezek 26:16; 32:11; and *HALOT* 1:350. Some instances of חָרַד may also include the concept of anger (e.g., Gen 27:33) or alarm/surprise (Ruth 3:8).

threat that the leonine Yahweh poses is clear in their trembling.¹⁷⁴ The dynamic at work in this text is thus altogether in line with what was seen in the other “positive” lion-texts of Joel 4:16 and Isa 31:4. Indeed, in this regard, it is almost as if Hos 11:10–11 is a microcosm of Hosea 11 as a whole with its presentation of God’s love and Israel’s hope—both tempered by the steel of Israel’s disobedience (11:2–3) and Yahweh’s ability to judge and destroy.¹⁷⁵

Finally, one should note that lions are frequently mentioned or associated with God. Such instances are not metaphorical in the same way as those already treated. However, the interaction between God and the lion at work in the metaphorical instances are also present in these other passages. The lion looks a bit more divine, that is, if it is God’s familiar. In turn, Yahweh begins to look increasingly terrifying and fearsome, if he can handle lions with ease. And that is exactly what Yahweh does.

Ps 104:21–22 recounts how the young lions seek their food from God, and in Job 38:39–40, Yahweh asks Job if he can hunt prey for the lion or satisfy the appetite of young lions, implying that it is God who does these things.¹⁷⁶ Perhaps Ps 111:5 is analogous when it states that Yahweh gives prey to those who fear him. As noted above, these texts may image Yahweh as the parental lion (or lioness?) providing food for its cubs. Whatever the case, the lion is frequently God’s punitive tool of choice, as in 2 Kgs 17:25–26 where Yahweh sends lions on those in Samaria who do not worship him. God promises a lion for anyone who escapes the terror to come on Moab (Isa 15:9). In Jer 5:6 Yahweh says much the same, this time for the cities of Judah. These prophetic oracles are enfleshed in the narratives of 1 Kings 13 and 20, where the one who disobeys the word of the Lord is killed by a lion.

Yahweh’s use of the lion in punitive contexts also explains how God is able to protect individuals such as David (1 Sam 17:37) or Daniel (Daniel 6) from the lion. The same is true of the psalmists, who bless Yahweh for not giving them as prey to the teeth of their enemies (Ps 124:6).

Given this familiarity with the lion—perhaps even familiarity with the lion *as* a familiar—it is appropriate that the divine beings that serve God have leonine faces (Ezek 1:10, 10:14; cf. 41:19)¹⁷⁷ and that the lion is used as an

¹⁷⁴ Wolff, *Hosea*, 203: “Israel returns home *only in terror*” (emphasis mine). Cf. *TLOT* 1:172: “*šlg* also expresses God’s might in these contexts.”

¹⁷⁵ Note the references to Admah and Zeboiim in Hos 11:8 as well as, more generally, 11:5–7.

¹⁷⁶ Yahweh not only can hunt *for* lions, he can also hunt lions *directly*. The latter seems to be the imagery at work in Ezek 12:13 and 17:20, where the lion-like figure that is hunted by Yahweh is the Judean prince/king.

¹⁷⁷ Ernst Vogt, “Die vier ‘Gesichter’ (*p̄nīm*) der Keruben in Ez,” *Bib* 60 (1979): 327–47 has argued that the cherubim in Ezekiel 1 and 10 do not have faces of the various animal figures but, instead, *features* of those animals. Whatever the case, they remain at least partially leonine. We are probably to think of the Cherubim as winged sphinxes. See *ibid.*, 347 and Othmar Keel, “Mit Cherubim und Serafim,” *Bibel heute* 112 (1992): 171–74;

image in the Temple (1 Kgs 7:29, 36; Ezek 41:19). This latter usage leads into a discussion of the lion in architectural and other miscellaneous contexts. Before doing so, it remains to summarize the metaphorical usages of the lion image.

2.3.5. Summary

The force of the metaphorical instances of lion imagery has been shown to be similar, if not identical, to what was seen in the naturalistic passages. Whether it is applied metaphorically as an image for the self or the righteous, the enemy or the wicked, or for the Deity and the divine realm, the lion is a trope of threat and power. Upon meeting up with the lion one can expect to be torn (טָרַף), to be broken (שָׁבַר), to be devoured (אָכַל). It is not surprising, therefore, to find the syntagma מִצִּיל אֵין employed frequently with the lion image.¹⁷⁸ There is simply no deliverance from the lion—especially when that lion happens to be Yahweh.¹⁷⁹ It should be noted, finally, that the fact that the lion image could be applied to Yahweh confirms the observation that there was no explicit anti-lion polemic in ancient Israel.¹⁸⁰

2.4. MISCELLANEOUS USAGES

The passages discussed in the miscellaneous category have, in the main, already been touched on above. To fill out the presentation, however, it is instructive to note that the lion is used as a decorative image in the Temple and on the throne and dais of Solomon (1 Kgs 7:29, 36, 10:19, 20; Ezek 41:19; 2 Chr 9:18, 19), that is, in architectural contexts.¹⁸¹ Some scholars have seen in Jer 2:30 another decorative use of the lion, arguing that the sword that devours like a lion there ought to be compared with swords that have an animal (especially a lion's) head as the hilt with the blade becoming the "tongue" of the animal. Such swords have been found in the archaeological record.¹⁸²

Elie Borowski, "Cherubim: God's Throne," *BAR* 21, no. 4 (July and August 1995): 36–41.

¹⁷⁸ Note Koenen's conclusion: "In beiden Fällen [that of the enemy and of Yahweh]—das ist entscheidend—bringen die Löwenvergleiche Macht, Angriff, ja völlige Vernichtung zum Ausdruck. Wo der Löwe erscheint, wütet der Tod" ("Süßes geht vom Starken aus," 190).

¹⁷⁹ Any exceptions to this—and there are no exceptions when the lion stands for Yahweh—are simply that and seem to prove the rule. Moreover, it might be noted that those who do deliver from or are delivered from the lion do so, in the main, by the activity of God. See 1 Sam 17:37 for David, Judg 14:6 for Samson, and Dan 6:23, 28 for Daniel.

¹⁸⁰ See, e.g., Hempel, "Jahwegleichnisse," 100.

¹⁸¹ The fact that these contexts are cultic and royal has bearing on the use of the lion with the Deity and the monarch/mighty one and probably indicates a use that goes beyond the realm of aesthetics into the apotropaic and symbolic (Othmar Keel; private communication).

¹⁸² Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 183, referring to T. J. Meek, "Archaeology and a Point of Hebrew Syntax," *BASOR* 122 (1951): 31–33. So also Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard,

The lion also appears as an image in eschatological contexts where its ferocious nature is transformed (Isa 11:6–7; 65:25) or where it is altogether missing (Isa 35:9). Surely it is the violence associated with the lion image, not to mention the possible widespread distribution of the lion throughout the region, that lends power to these visions. The various uses of the lion in PNs, GNs, and military designations have already been discussed,¹⁸³ as has its use as a motif in wisdom contexts (e.g., Judg 14:14, 18; Job 28:8; Eccl 9:4; Prov 22:13, etc.). Finally, there has been some discussion regarding the lion as an astrological symbol in ancient Israel (see Excursus 2: The Astrological Lion).

2.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a complete and comprehensive presentation of: 1) the naturalistic data pertaining to lions in ancient Israel that is reflected in and derivable from the Hebrew Bible; and 2) the use and types of lion imagery in metaphors found in the Hebrew Bible. In the case of the metaphorical passages, the lion is used primarily for a quartet of referents: the self or righteous (insider-group), the enemy or wicked (outsider-group), the monarch/mighty one, and the Deity. In each case, the lion image carries particular nuances: it is more positive in tone when applied to insiders, unqualifiedly negative when applied to outsiders, mixed when applied to the monarch/mighty one and to God. In all cases, the naturalistic included, the lion image bespeaks power and threat, even and especially fear. These elements, then, comprise the “minor facets of the general culture” regarding lions and were the characteristics of lions “uppermost in people’s minds” (Henle). This is crucial information regarding the user-context and user’s sign-context, and sheds important light on the use of the lion as a metaphor in the Hebrew Bible.

However, this textual evidence from the Hebrew Bible is only one window onto these contexts. When the nature of the Hebrew Bible as a type of curated artifact (William G. Dever) is taken into account, then it becomes imperative to open other windows to both check and confirm what is preliminarily concluded here. Part II of this work attempts to do this by investigating the lion in the art and literature of various ancient Near Eastern cultures. It is possible that this data will cast light on questions of influence, dependence, distinctiveness, and so forth with regard to Israel’s use of the lion image. Yet, before turning to the broader ancient Near East, one must first survey the archaeological—specifically, the epigraphic and iconographical—data from ancient Israel/Palestine. This material, too, will help to confirm or

Jeremiah 1–25, 41. Examples have been found in Yazilikaya and Tell Rimah. See, e.g., **figs. 4.197–198, 4.283, 4.301.**

¹⁸³ It could be added, however, that Schieman’s interpretation of Neh 6:2 would understand כַּפִּירִים there as another instance of a lion-term used as a designation (“princes”; see “Covenanting with the Princes,” 367–69). A further instance may be אֲשֹׁר in Deut 33:2, if it is related to Arabic *ʾlṣ*, “lion.” See Patrick D. Miller, Jr., “Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33,” *HTR* 57 (1964): 240–43; idem, “Animal Names,” 183.

disconfirm, illustrate and inform the literary evidence that has been presented in this chapter in more or less synchronic fashion. But such an investigation will help with more than synchronic vs. diachronic issues, however. The archaeological material is, given the literacy discussion in Chapter 1, at least as important as the texts that have come down to us—at least for the purposes of reconstructing ancient Israelite religion. Hence, a survey of the lion in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine is the topic of the next chapter.

EXCURSUS 1: ARIEL

The term אַרְיֵאל or its like occurs a number of times in the Hebrew Bible. These include:

- the GN “Ariel” (אַרְיֵאל), a name for Jerusalem in Isa 29:1 (2x), 2 (2x), and 7;
- the PN “Areli” (אַרְאֵלִי) in Gen 46:16 and Num 26:17 (2x);
- the PN “Ariel” (אַרְיֵאל) in Ezra 8:16;
- the perhaps-related (?) terms הַרְאֵל in Ezek 43:15 and אַרְאֵל in Ezek 43:15, 16;¹
- the uncertain, suffixed term אַרְאֵלִם in Isa 33:7; and
- the even more debated instances of “the two אֱלֹהֵי מוֹאָב of Moab” (שְׁנֵי אַרְאֵל מוֹאָב; שְׁנֵי אַרְאֵל מוֹאָב) in 2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22, respectively.

The meaning of the word(s) in each of these passages is far from clear and has produced much scholarly discussion. May’s assessment, made over sixty years ago, still holds true: Ariel is among “the more tantalizing problems of the Old Testament.”² This brief excursus cannot possibly resolve the meaning of this term—or better *terms*—in and for all of these passages. Indeed, in my judgment, a flaw in previous scholarship has been the attempt to find only one solution that would fit every instance of the term(s) in the Hebrew Bible, not to mention the one (or two) occurrence(s) in the Mesha stela (see Chapter 3 §3.7).³ It is more likely that different explanations must be proffered for different instances. In this light, it is worthwhile to review a few of the more important suggestions about the meaning of the term(s) found in the secondary literature.

1. Ronald Youngblood has proposed, largely on the basis of the spelling of Ariel in 1QIsa^a (אַרְיֵאל),⁴ that “*אַרְיֵאל in Isa. 29:1, 2a, and 7 means ‘City of

¹ In both of the latter references, the Q reads אַרְיֵאל.

² Herbert G. May, “*Ephod and Ariel*,” *AJSL* 56 (1939): 44; more recently, Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1985), 161: “The name Ariel is as problematic as it is evocative.”

³ At first, Samuel Feigin, “The Meaning of Ariel,” *JBL* 39 (1920): 131–37, states that there are four different meanings of the term אַרְאֵל: hero, altar or place of sacrifice, name for Jerusalem, and image of god or אֱלֹהֵי מוֹאָב. However, he then attempts to derive all four from the realm/cult of the dead. May, “*Ephod and Ariel*,” 44 attempts to demonstrate that the Ariel is “a palladium...a portable instrument of the cult...important in divination techniques.”

⁴ See Dewey M. Beegle, “Proper Names in the New Isaiah Scroll,” *BASOR* 123 (1951): 26–30, who pointed out that in each case Ariel is spelled with *waw* instead of the MT’s

God.”⁵ He ties the spelling at Qumran back to the Akkadian (via Sumerian URU) prefix *uru-* “city.” The phonological shifts and developments necessary to connect these linguistic sets can be challenged.⁶ Furthermore, in the Isaianic oracle, “Ariel” is used as an epithet referring to Jerusalem,⁷ the city of Yahweh, despite whether or not the term itself means “city of God.” Regardless of that, given the linguistic problems involved, Youngblood’s definition of the GN “Ariel” seems unlikely.

2. Many scholars have thought that Ariel—even the instances in Isaiah 29 (and especially Isa 29:2b)—is a term meaning “altar-hearth” or the like.⁸ Such a perspective associates the Hebrew term with Arabic *ḥiryat* (“fire-pit” or “altar-hearth”), and explains the *-l* as an affirmative, with the root being *ḥrh*, “to burn.”⁹ Such a derivation has been offered especially for the Ariel references in Ezek 43:15–16. There, Ariel appears in context with *הָרְאֵל*¹⁰ (perhaps “mountain of God”?) and apparently refers to the uppermost part of the altar.¹¹

3. Other scholars, notably Roland de Vaux and W. F. Albright, have seen in Ariel a loanword from Akkadian-Sumerian *arallû*, a term for the underworld and mountain of the gods.¹² In their opinion, the Ariel (or Harel) is not

yodh. In his estimation the “scribe was probably following an orthographic tradition which employed the variant form *ḥarūḥ:l*” (29).

⁵ Ronald Youngblood, “Ariel, ‘City of God,’” in *Essays on the Occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Dropsie University (1909–1979)* (ed. Abraham I. Katsh and Leon Nemoy; Philadelphia: The Dropsie University, 1979), 457–62; citation from 458.

⁶ I.e., would Akkadian-Sumerian *uru-* > *ḥr* (see *HALOT* 2:821) as well as > *yṣrû-* and > *ḥuru-* in Hebrew (so Youngblood)? On the latter question, cf. Feigin, “The Meaning of Ariel,” 133, who states that “[t]he Assyrian spelling *Urusalim* is merely the cuneiform reproduction of **Ierušalem*.” Moreover, is it likely that a spelling at Qumran accurately preserves a (reconstructed) historical spelling derived from much earlier texts and from far disparate locales? Is it not just as likely, if not more likely, that the spelling in 1QIsa^a is erroneous or interpretive in some fashion?

⁷ So BDB 72; W. Harold Mare, “Ariel (Place),” *ABD* 1:377–78. Cf. S. Münster, “Ariel,” *DDD* 88, who thinks the term does refer to Jerusalem in Isaiah 29 but that its meaning is uncertain. The possible exception to the above judgment is the use of Ariel in Isa 29:2b (see below).

⁸ See BDB 72; Mare, “Ariel (Place),” 1:378. Cf. Leslie J. Hoppe, “Jacob’s Well,” *Bible Today* 29 (1991): 33–34.

⁹ *HALOT* 1:87 (cf. 1:84–85); Münster, “Ariel,” 88 (the second of Münster’s two possible derivations; for the first see below). On affirmative *-l*, see B-L §61u (pp. 503–504) but this particular form is not cited. The meaning “altar-hearth” has been proposed for *ḥrw* in *KAI* #32 line 3 (*KAI* 1:7; see *DNWSI* 1:104, *KAI* 2:50–51). One might compare Punic *ḥrh* (“hearth”) and *ḥrwḥ* (“cook?”) (*DNWSI* 1:104) as well as Official Aramaic *blḥrw*: perhaps a title for the keeper of the altar of Bel (so *DNWSI* 1:166).

¹⁰ For Ezek 43:15a, *HALOT* 1:87 recommends reading *הָרְאֵל* instead of *הָרְאֵל*.

¹¹ Münster, “Ariel,” 88.

¹² *AHW* 1:64. See Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 412. William Foxwell Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel: The Ayer Lectures of the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School* (5th ed.; Baltimore:

etymologically an “altar-hearth”; instead, the altar for burnt offerings ought to be understood as symbolizing the cosmic world-mountain.¹³

However, as Levenson has noted, even if there is a connection to the “mountain of God” (after *harḥēl*), “this...was probably a folk-etymology rather than a scientific understanding of the meaning of the term for *ḥar[ḥ]ēl* (or *harḥēl*) could well have signified the altar-hearth without any allusion to cosmic symbolism.”¹⁴ More significantly, philological—not to mention contextual—problems arise for any argument connecting Ariel to Akkadian-Sumerian *arallû*.¹⁵ Moreover, the reading of the LXX in Ezek 43:15–16 is consistently ἀριηλ and this also argues against treating *הֲרֵאֵל* as the base-form.¹⁶ Finally, one might well wonder, if the meaning “mountain of God” were intended, why an author/editor would not simply write *הֲרֵ אֵל* (cf. Ezek 43:15a) instead of a cryptic *אֵל(י)אֵל* or, worse, *אֲרֵאֵל*.

4. The form *אֲרֵאֵלִים* in Isa 33:7 is especially difficult. Some have translated it as “the valiant” (so NRSV) or the like, though BDB’s judgment is that the text is “[w]holly uncertain.”¹⁷ Richard D. Weis has written an in-depth text-critical investigation of this verse.¹⁸ He concludes that, despite some evidence for a (defective) masculine plural ending, *אֲרֵאֵלִים* is probably the original form.¹⁹ According to evidence from later exegetes, there are four possible vocalizations of this form: the first two take the form as a single word: either *אֲרֵאֵלִים* or *אֲרֵאֵלִים*. The latter of these is more common among medieval exegetes, but is understood in three different ways: 1) a singular term relating to the altar of the Temple, 2) a singular referring to (plural) angels or

The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 151; and especially 218 n. 85: “The false assumption that the first element in the word *arīḥel*, etc., means etymologically ‘hearth’ seems ineradicable. That the *harḥēl* served as an ‘altar-hearth’ is true, but there is nothing in the name to require this interpretation.” See also W. F. Albright, “The Babylonian Temple-Tower and the Altar of Burnt-Offering,” *JBL* 39 (1920): 137–42, especially 139: “the rendering *hearth of God* is excluded by the fact that there is no word *irjah*, hearth, in Arabic, as lightly assumed by all the commentators.”

¹³ See *HALOT* 1:87; de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 413; possibly also Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 162.

¹⁴ Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 162.

¹⁵ So May, “*Ephod and Ariel*,” 52–53; *contra* Albright, “The Babylonian Temple-Tower,” 139. In the latter, Albright stated that Ariel could not be a genuine compound word in Hebrew for lack of parallels. Writing almost twenty years later, with the benefit of the Ugaritic texts, May, however, was able to list a number (see “*Ephod and Ariel*,” 53 and n. 49).

¹⁶ Feigin, “The Meaning of Ariel,” 132.

¹⁷ BDB 72. *DCH* 1:377, drawing on the hearth-connection, suggests “priest, i.e., person connected with altar hearth” as a possibility.

¹⁸ Richard D. Weis, “Angels, Altars and Angles of Visions: The Case of *אֲרֵאֵלִים* in Isaiah 33:7,” in *Tradition of the Text: Studies Offered to Dominique Barthélemy in Celebration of his 70th Birthday* (ed. Gerard J. Norton and Stephan Pisano; OBO 109; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1991), 285–92.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 287, cf. 289.

messengers; or 3) a singular referring to (plural) nobles or chiefs.²⁰ The other two possible vocalizations for אֲרִיאֵל understand the term as the conflation of two originally separate words. In this perspective, the original reading was אֲרִיא לֵא: “I will reveal [so Qal (or, better, Hiphil); alternatively, Niphal: be revealed] to them” or the like. Weis believes this understanding is supported by 1QIsa^a and the LXX,²¹ and argues that this is the best solution. Understanding the term as a noun or noun + suffix is thus, in his view, a later development that originates only in the interpretive traditions.²² Weis concludes:

Not only is this [אֲרִיא לֵא] attested in witnesses...but the single-word text is...not encountered until [later]. This single-word form of the text, אֲרִיאֵל, arose in one of two ways. It was a facilitation of the morphologically difficult two-word text that both was made possible by, and was expressive of, the interpretive traditions that saw this word as referring to angels or to an altar. Alternatively, it was created...as a deliberate attempt to close off the reading of the two-word text as a *niphal* verb.... In either case, our conclusion that the two-word consonantal text is older has a high degree of probability.²³

Weis may well be correct, but it should be stressed that the text is still heavily debated among scholars and is frequently emended in some fashion. Finally, it is of some interest to note Weis’ observation that later Rabbinic tradition understood the term to designate a class of angels, and that, still later, Ariel (spelled Ariael), became an epithet of the lion-faced Yaltabaoth in Gnostic literature.²⁴

5. Scholars often derive the Ariel terms, even the one occurring in Isa 33:7, from one of the main Hebrew terms for lion, אֵרִי.²⁵ This is especially true for the PNs Ariel in Ezra 8:16 and Areli in Gen 46:16 and Num 26:17 (2x; the latter is a gentilic).²⁶ If this is correct, the significance and function of these PNs are not unlike the other leonine PNs treated in Chapter 2 save one notable difference: the Ariel PNs would be *explicitly* theophoric.²⁷ While אֲרִיאֵל could

²⁰ Ibid., 287–88. Among the exegetes holding to the latter option is Saadiah Gaon.

²¹ Ibid., 292. There is no doubt that 1QIsa^a does divide the word in two. The LXX evidence (ἰδοὺ δὲ ἐν τῷ φόβῳ ἡμῶν αὐτοὶ φοβηθήσονται), however, is not so clear and reflects אֲרִיא not אֲרִיאֵל (see John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986], 596 n. 8). Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, the Targum, and the Vulgate, on the other hand, do reflect אֲרִיאֵל (see *HALOT* 1:82).

²² Weis, “Angels, Altars and Angles of Visions,” 290.

²³ Ibid., 292.

²⁴ Münger, “Ariel,” 89.

²⁵ This is the first of Münger’s two possible derivations (“Ariel,” 88): from “lion” with theophoric element. But Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), 238, thinks “der erste Bestandteil ist ganz undurchsichtig.”

²⁶ For Ariel the person, see Gerald L. Mattingly, “Ariel (Person),” *ABD* 1:377.

²⁷ Korpel has stated that the only biblical theomorphic names that might have an animal as the *nomen regens* are אֲרִיאֵל and עֲנַלְי (see Marjo Christina Annette Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* [UBL 8; Münster: UGARIT-Verlag, 1990], 541, citing Jeaneane D. Fowler, *Theophoric Personal Names in*

be translated as a genitive construction, “lion of God/El,”²⁸ most theophoric names are typically understood as making predications about the deity in question—so, in this case, “God/El is a lion.”²⁹ Alternatively, it could and perhaps should be understood optatively: “May God/El be a/the lion (for him),” or the like.³⁰

Whether the possible leonine interpretation of Ariel can help in the vexed question of 2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22 is uncertain. Many scholars have related “the two Ariel(s) of Moab” here to altar-hearths,³¹ or, following the LXX, understood the term to be a PN: “the two (sons of) Ariel of Moab.”³² Again, the situation is difficult and cannot be resolved here; any plausible solution depends on a number of factors—philological, contextual, archaeological, and otherwise.³³ It should be pointed out, however, that several scholars have translated the terms in these passages as “heroes” or “champions.”³⁴ Patrick D.

Ancient Hebrew: A Comparative Study [JSOTSup 49; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988], 120). But note that אֱרִיִּל is attested in the inscriptional evidence (see Jeffrey H. Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* [HSS 31; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986], 47).

²⁸ E.g., BDB 72: “lioness of El” (without justification of the feminine); August Wünsche, *Die Bildersprache des Alten Testaments: Ein Beitrag zur aesthetischen Würdigung des poetischen Schrifttums im Alten Testament* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1906), 58: “Gotteslöwe.”

²⁹ So, e.g., W. A. M. Beuken, “God’s Presence in Salem: A Study of Psalm 76,” in *Loven en geloven* (ed. J. Ridderbos and A. Ridderbos-Boersma; Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Ton Bolland, 1975), 142: “proper names with *ℓ*/ seldom constitute a construct state; they mostly form nominal or verbal sentences. Although proper names of the latter category more often than not exhibit the syntactic pattern subject-predicate, the reverse pattern does occur” (he is relying here on the work of Noth, *Die israelitischen Personnamen*, 91). Beuken himself thinks that the term may be translated “God is a lion” (“God’s Presence,” 142). Cf. Bruce Vawter, “The Canaanite Background of Genesis 49,” *CBQ* 17 (1955): 5: “The existence of a lion-god is suggested by the Hebrew name Ariel.”

³⁰ Cf. Patrick D. Miller, “El the Warrior,” in *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (JSOTSup 267; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 39 for a comparable Arabic PN: *sbll*, which he translates “El is a lion (= strong).”

³¹ So BDB 72.

³² So the LXX at 2 Sam 23:20: τοὺς δύο υἱοὺς ἀριηλ τοῦ Μωαβ; but this assumes parablepsis (perhaps a double haplography; so Münger, “Ariel,” 88–89) in the MT. Note that in 1 Chr 11:22, LXX reads simply: τοὺς δύο ἀριηλ Μωαβ.

³³ I.e., can נִכְה (H) be used to refer to striking an *object* (i.e., an altar-hearth)? Already May, “*Ephod and Ariel*,” 57 and n. 69 argued against such a possibility. So, too, Münger, “Ariel,” 88–89: “Consequently, Ariel here designates some kind of person, best translated as ‘lion of God’ by the first of the possible etymologies, be it a warrior or a mythical figure of yet unknown religious background.” Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1964), 406, on the other hand, thinks the Ariel(s) here are real lions, given what follows in the immediate context.

³⁴ E.g., H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 103. *HALOT* 1:82 would read אֲרִיאֵל in 2 Sam 23:20 with the meaning “warrior[s of].” For an amazing collection of lion-lore that has bearing on such an interpretation of Ariel, see Allan H. Godbey, “Ariel, or David-Cultus,” *AJSL* 41 (1925): 253–66.

Miller is among these latter and, relying on the work of Svi Rin, has noted that the hero (“Ariel”) in this passage “is called ‘lion of God’ or possibly ‘very great lion’; i.e. an animal name suggesting strength and courage has become a technical designation for a warrior.”³⁵ Rin’s contribution is on the latter possibility; he takes Ariel as a superlative: “a very great lion (hero).”³⁶

To summarize: no consensus exists on the meaning of the term(s) Ariel. Each instance must be treated on a case-by-case basis. Still, it is at least possible that some occurrences of the term(s) ought to be etymologically connected to the lion (אֲרִי) and to the deity (אֵל) (perhaps as a superlative), though such a connection will not suit every passage equally well. The latter point explains why other derivations have been (and will continue to be) proposed, as well as why those other explanations need to be suggested in the first place.³⁷

³⁵ Patrick D. Miller, “Animal Names as Designations in Ugaritic and Hebrew,” *UF* 2 (1970): 185. Note *ibid.*, 185–86, for the possibility that the same word (and interpretation thereof) is found in Isa 33:7 and for other comparative evidence (notably, Phoenician *ʾr-ʾl* and Egyptian *ʾr-r-ʾl*).

³⁶ Svi Rin, *Acts of the Gods: The Ugaritic Epic Poetry Transliterated, Transcribed and Interpreted* (Jerusalem: Israel Society for Biblical Research, 1968), viii. So also Othmar Keel in a personal communication to me.

³⁷ See above and, further, May, “*Ephod* and *Ariel*,” 53–54 and *HALOT* 1:87 for still more possibilities. Note also the related discussion in Chapter 3 (§3.7).

EXCURSUS 2: THE ASTROLOGICAL LION

The lion has often been used in astrological contexts as a symbol for particular constellations—most famously the constellation Leo.¹ This astrological use is found in Egyptian texts and images (e.g., **fig. 2.4** from the tomb of Seti I [1294–1279]), where the lion sometimes represents the god Horus, though it can also stand for other deities as well (e.g., Shu and Tefnut).² Akkadian sources also call astrological phenomena by lion terms, especially *n̄štu* and *n̄ltu*, particularly in Neo-Babylonian materials.³ The Akkadian term *n̄šum* is specifically used to refer to the constellation Leo.⁴ This Mesopotamian connection is also found in artistic depictions. To cite but two examples, some of the lions on *kudurru* stones may be depictions of the constellation Leo,⁵ and **fig. 2.5**, from a Seleucid astronomical text from Uruk, probably represents Leo on Hydra.⁶

¹ See, e.g., the data collected in Willy Hartner, “The Earliest History of the Constellations in the Near East and the Motif of the Lion-Bull Combat,” *JNES* 24 (1965): 1–16 (and Pls. I–XVI); and Richard B. Wilkinson, “A Possible Origin for the ‘Shoulder Ornaments’ in Egyptian Representations of Lions,” *VA* 5 (1989): 59–71. Note also the use of the lion as a solar image (see Chapter 4). Of interest here is the debate on the meaning and significance of the hair whirl on the shoulders of many lion figures in ancient Near Eastern art: see, e.g., Helene J. Kantor, “The Shoulder Ornament of Near Eastern Lions,” *JNES* 6 (1947): 250–74; A. J. Arkell, “The Shoulder Ornament of Near Eastern Lions,” *JNES* 7 (1948): 52; Dorothea M. A. Bate, “The ‘Shoulder Ornament’ of Near Eastern Lions,” *JNES* 9 (1950): 53–54 (and Pl. II); E. Douglas Van Buren, “An Additional Note on the Hair Whirl,” *JNES* 9 (1950): 54–55; Helene J. Kantor, “A Further Comment on the Shoulder Ornament,” *JNES* 9 (1950): 55–56; and Anne Vollgraff-Roes, “The Lion with Body Markings in Oriental Art,” *JNES* 12 (1953): 40–49. Kantor argued strongly that the element was “purely ornamental” (“The Shoulder Ornament,” 265); Arkel and Bate that the ornament reflects a naturalistic detail in real (largely young and male) lions; Vollgraff-Roes that the symbol is solar. More recently, Wilkinson, “A Possible Origin,” has interpreted the ornament as stellar, perhaps representing the star α Leonis (*Regulus*). See there and further, and more generally, the work of Sara L. Gardner (Ph.D. diss.; University of Arizona, 2002).

² See Constant de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens du lion dans l'Égypte ancienne* (2d ed.; ed. Gaber Aly Hussein; Luxor: Gezirat El Bairat, n. d. [1980?]; 1st ed. = Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951), 391–95 (and the earlier literature cited there). Wilkinson, “A Possible Origin,” 60 points out that the form of the stars in this figure and others like it correspond to the outline of the stars in the constellation Leo (see his figs. 5–9).

³ See *AHW* 2:783; *CAD* N/2, 192–93.

⁴ See *AHW* 2:783; *CAD* N/2, 193, 197.

⁵ See Ursula Seidl, *Die babylonischen Kudurru-Reliefs: Symbole mesopotamischer Gottheiten* (OBO 87; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Feiburg Schweiz, 1989), 140.

⁶ Wilkinson, Gardner, and Hartner (see n. 1) have opined that the presentation of the lion on top of other subjects (e.g., crocodiles, bulls, deer, humans) may also represent astrological phenomena. If so, this would have far-reaching implications for the many images of the lion as dominator of prey that are so common in the ancient Near East (see Chapters 3–4). The particular stances and relationships of the figures (i.e., the *iconographical*—not simply astrological—constellation), however, must be kept in mind.

This material is of only minor interest for an investigation of the lion in the Hebrew Bible, however.⁷ While there has been speculation regarding the solar connections of the lion in the story of Samson (Judges 14), for the most part the biblical text does not know of a close or pronounced connection between the lion and astrological phenomena. Indeed, the only two possible exceptions employ terms unrelated to the main Hebrew lion terms used in the Hebrew Bible. These possible exceptions are עֵיִשׁ in Job 38:32⁸ and עֵשׁ III in Job 9:9,⁹ both of which have been related by some scholars to the constellation Leo.

Such a connection seems to be based on later Arabic evidence,¹⁰ however, and it is noteworthy that the Versions offer conflicting and confused information on the point. Moreover, modern translations favor an identification—not with Leo—but with “the Bear” (so NRSV, NASB, NIV).¹¹ Hence, any connection between the terms in Job 9:9 and 38:32 and lion imagery—even in astrological perspective—must remain tentative. Even so, it is noteworthy that both אֲרִי and אֲרִיָּה are frequently used in later Jewish sources to indicate signs of the Zodiac and this is especially true of zodiacal imagery in synagogue art.¹²

Wilkinson notes, e.g., that in Egyptian presentations of the lion as an astrological constellation, it is “always shown in the same manner, reclining with its front legs stretched before it in a form which accurately approximates that of the positions of the brightest stars of the group” (“A Possible Origin,” 61). While other, more aggressive, presentations might also be related to stellar constellations, it is unlikely that *all* do. Many, that is, are to be explained primarily as representations of the lion as hunter-predator, even though this often has symbolic significance (see Chapters 3–4).

⁷ Note that astrological connections are found in later Early Jewish documents. See, e.g., *Sib. Or.* 5.517, 523, 525.

⁸ See *HALOT* 2:823 (and the bibliography there) for the view that here עֵיִשׁ refers to the constellation of the (female) lion. “Her children” (בְּנֵיהֶּ) would then be the “hounds” that follow it—that is, the small stars of Virgo.

⁹ See *HALOT* 2:895, for the view that עֵשׁ III in Job 9:9 is to be related to עֵיִשׁ in Job 38:22, so that it too refers to Leo. But note also עֵשׁ I (“moth”) and עֵשׁ II (“pus”).

¹⁰ *NIDOTTE* 1:514. For a sampling of the lion in astronomical and astrological Arabic sources, see H. Kindermann, “al-Asad,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 1:681–83, especially 682.

¹¹ So also Marvin H. Pope, *Job: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (3rd ed.; AB 15; Garden City: Doubleday, 1973), 68, 70–71, 289, 301.

¹² See *DNWSI* 1:107; Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (2 vols.; New York: Judaica, 1992), 1:118.

Chapter 3

“There Is A Lion In The Road, A Ferocious Lion On The Streets!” (Prov 26:13): The Lion in the Archaeological Record of Ancient Israel/Palestine

“Anyone who wants to reconstruct the religious symbol system of Canaan and Israel accurately, and is not content with mere supposition, cannot avoid pictures.”¹

“Religions are expressed as much in pictures and signs as they are in words.”²

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Despite its importance, the textual material from the Hebrew Bible comprises only one part of the data concerning the use of the lion as image and metaphor in ancient Israel. Another critical corpus of information is found in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine. An overview of this material is presented in this chapter. The reasons why such a presentation is necessary have already been discussed and need not be rehearsed.³ Yet, in light of the primary concern of this study—the use of the lion as image and metaphor in the Hebrew Bible as well as in ancient Israel/Palestine—several preliminary comments are in order.

First, the rise of Israel as a distinct socio-historical and geo-political entity, while debated, is certainly to be dated no earlier than the Late Bronze period. Therefore, finds from the Middle Bronze and Early Bronze Ages, not to mention still earlier periods, are generally ignored. Similarly, though the land continued to be occupied throughout the first millennium and into the first centuries of the Common Era, the Hellenistic period marks a distinctively different stage in the history and archaeology of the land. This presentation will go no later, then, than the Persian Period. This is not to say that these earlier and later periods are unimportant—indeed, at many points the earlier periods are highly formative for the periods under discussion here, while the latter are,

¹ Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 394–95; cf. xi: “Anyone who systematically ignores the pictorial evidence that a culture has produced can hardly expect to recreate even a minimally adequate description of the culture itself...the sadly neglected pictorial evidence from Canaan and Israel must be treated as being equally as important as textual evidence.”

² John Bowker, “Preface,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (ed. John Bowker; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), viii.

³ See Chapter 1 and the conclusion of Chapter 2 (§2.5). Note also the important comments of Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, xi, 1–5, 7–17, 393–96.

at the very least, *informative* for tracking later developments, trajectories, and so forth. Still, it seems that the time frame of 1500–332 is most likely to be the period from which most of the biblical traditions, if not actual compositions, stem. Hence, here too is where material remains most likely to reflect the symbol system of ancient Israel are to be found.⁴

Second, the geographical extent of “ancient Israel/Palestine” must, for practical purposes, be defined. This chapter, therefore, follows Ben-Tor’s delimitation in focusing only on “the region that forms the focus of biblical history—the Land of Israel, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea and from the Galilee to the Negev.”⁵ Finds from outside this area, including those of Transjordan, are, with only a few exceptions, reserved for Chapter 4.

This geographical circumscription should not be taken as indicating or implying that every item included in this chapter is indisputably *Israelite*. This is patently not the case. There are many imports among the finds discussed here, as well as local imitations of styles and motifs that originated outside the land (see further below). Even so, the fact that these objects, whatever their origin or inspiration, were found within the geographical area of ancient Israel/Palestine has bearing on any assessment of what images of the lion were known, “on the ground,” and available in the area in the time periods under consideration.

Third, even with these geographical and chronological delimiters, a large number of artifacts bearing on the use of the lion as image and metaphor have been found. Consequently, the presentation here is necessarily selective.⁶ The

⁴ For archaeology, iconography, and symbol systems, see Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 7–13, 393–96; and Christoph Uehlinger, “Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals, Iconography and Syro-Palestinian Religions of Iron Age II: Some Afterthoughts and Conclusions,” in *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Fribourg on April 17–20, 1991* (ed. Benjamin Sass and Christoph Uehlinger; OBO 125; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 1993), 257–88.

⁵ Amnon Ben-Tor, ed., *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), xx.

⁶ In the main, artifacts depicting composite-creatures (*Mischwesen*) that include the lion or part of the lion as a piece in the overall composition of a particular figure are excluded given the focus of the present study on the lion proper. Even so, it is significant that such beasts—even one as familiar in Mesopotamia as Lamaštu—were also known in Israel/Palestine. See Mordechai Cogan, “A Lamashtu Plaque from the Judean Shephelah,” *IEJ* 45 (1995): 155–61. Note also the unusual ivory discussed by Robert L. Alexander, “Šaušga and the Hittite Ivory from Megiddo,” *JNES* 50 (1991): 161–82. The sphinx and griffin are two of the composite-creatures well known in ancient Israel/Palestine, above all in the Samaria and Megiddo ivories, and scholars frequently connect such depictions with the Cherubim and Seraphim. See Elie Borowski, “Cherubim: God’s Throne?,” *BAR* 21, no. 4 (July/August 1995): 36–41; Othmar Keel, “Mit Cherubim und Serafim,” *Bibel heute* 112 (1992): 171–74; idem, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst: Eine neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* (SB 84/85; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977). Note further the

finds that are included are discussed according to chronological period; information on their respective find-sites is provided wherever possible. This method of presentation should function as a means to trace similarities and developments across locales and periods. For this reason also, unprovenanced materials—most notably inscribed seals—are relegated to a separate section. While such items are hard to use given their uncertain origins and the possibility that some or many could be forgeries, the information provided by such pieces is, nevertheless, too important to ignore completely.⁷ Finally, the chapter concludes with a treatment of the limited onomastic evidence pertaining to the lion.

It will be noted that most of the objects treated in this chapter belong to the category of minor art (seals, scarabs, amulets, etc.). This is primarily due to two factors:

- 1) the notable lack (comparatively speaking) of monumental art and architecture from ancient Israel/Palestine; and, more importantly,
- 2) the importance of the minor arts due to: a) their frequency, b) their ability to portray constellations of motifs (i.e., iconographical context), c) the fact that such objects often seem to reflect private or family religion; and d) their potential to function as visual disseminators on a mass-communication level.⁸

strange iconography of the ninth- or eighth-century stone weight discussed by N. Avigad, “A Sculptured Hebrew Stone Weight,” *IEJ* 18 (1968): 181–87, as well as the many LB and IA lion-headed figurines from Tell el-Farḥah (S.), Megiddo, and Beth-Shemesh that are catalogued by Christian Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel* (OBO 138; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1994), 395–403. Despite the elimination of the composite-beast image from this study, it should be noted that the complex *combination of metaphors* that are often used to describe Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible, many of which also use lion imagery (see Chapter 2), might be thought of as a type of *Mischmetaphor*. This is taken up further in Chapter 5 (§5.4.3).

⁷ Note the cautions of Benjamin Sass, “The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals: Iconism vs. Aniconism,” in Sass and Uehlinger, *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals*, especially 245–46; and Sass in Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* [hereinafter *CWSSS*] (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997), 552.

⁸ The Biblical Institute at Fribourg has gathered together more than 9,000 stamp seals. The publication of these seals is ongoing (see Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit* [2 vols. to date; OBO.SA 10, 13; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1995–]). For the importance of the seals, see further Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 10, 12–13, 394–95, 396, 406–407; idem, *Altorientalische Miniatürkunst: Die ältesten visuellen Massenkommunikationsmittel. Ein Blick in die Sammlungen des Biblischen Instituts der Universität Freiburg Schweiz* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1996), *passim*; Othmar Keel, “Bildträger aus Palästina/Israel und die besondere

Lastly, it should be noted that the large amount of material remains bearing on the discussion at hand—even from this delimited area and period—dictates that the presentation must not only be selective, but also (as with any task) interpretive. Broadly speaking, the materials presented below are typically interpreted in the light of their similar *contents* (particularly the naturalistic, cultic/religious, or official/royal), *contexts* (oftentimes in official or cultic assemblages), and *connections* (especially to the South and North). More specifically, the interpretation of the images here and in Chapter 4 builds upon much work that has gone before and thus the particular reasons for identifying certain images as leonine (or otherwise) are not always provided in great detail. In brief, however, it should be said that leonine identifications are based on a number of factors, including the *Traditionsgeschichte* of the imagery in question, representation of mane(s), placement of the tail (often curved upward over the back), and so forth. Similarly, other conventions govern the identification of other images, for example, divine or royal figures. At the same time, it must again be underscored that this process is *interpretive*; images, no less than texts (but also no *more* than texts), are often opaque and frequently open to more than one interpretation, not to mention further discussion.

3.2. LATE BRONZE AGE I–II (1500–1200)⁹

In many ways, the presentation of the lion in Late Bronze (LB) materials is in marked continuity with the Middle Bronze (MB) IIB tradition where the lion forms one of the most common figures on scarabs of the period.¹⁰ The data collected by Keel and Uehlinger pertaining to the significance of the lion in MB materials can be synthesized as follows:

- 1) The lion is often associated with a/the goddess;¹¹
- 2) the lion is often presented aggressively, trampling or attacking caprids, crocodiles, even humans, and/or pieces thereof;¹² the lion is always the victor in these depictions and might represent the power of the king or the king himself as well as the aggressive power of the goddess;¹³

Bedeutung der Minitaurkunst,” in Othmar Keel and Silvia Schroer, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel I* (OBO 67; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1985), 7–47; and, most recently, Christoph Uehlinger, ed., *Images as Media: Sources for the Cultural History of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (1st millennium BCE)* (OBO 175; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 2000).

⁹ Periodization follows *OEANE* 5:411.

¹⁰ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 22, cf. 29, 33; Othmar Keel, *Deine Blicke sind Tauben: Zur Metaphorik des Hohen Liedes* (SBS 114/115; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984), 39–45, 130–39.

¹² This motif is early; see the lion-over-human figure at Megiddo that dates from ca. 3300 (Gordon Loud, *Megiddo II: Seasons of 1935–39* [Oriental Institute Publications 62; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1948], Pl. 275, fig. 9).

¹³ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 22, 23.

- 3) despite its aggressive tenor, the lion can also represent “life forces and regenerative power”;¹⁴
- 4) some motifs used with the lion (e.g., the trampling of enemies, portrayal of the lion with *uraei*, etc.) are Egyptian in origin or influence;¹⁵ and
- 5) several lion artifacts served apotropaic functions.¹⁶

Virtually every one of these points has a counterpart in the LB evidence, not to mention the later Iron Age (IA) periods, though admittedly not in equal or identical fashion. The LB period also witnesses new developments—for example, evidence of northern, Mesopotamian influence to complement the influence coming from Egypt in the south. This is clear, for instance, in the basalt lion orthostats recovered at Hazor¹⁷ or the cylinder seals made “using the popular Mitannian style” found at sites like Megiddo.¹⁸

An example of the latter, which also evidences a (loose) connection between the lion and the *goddess*, is the LB cylinder seal found at Megiddo (**fig. 3.1**) where the naked goddess appears flanked by a reclining lion and bull. She may be depicted here as “Mistress of the Animals,”¹⁹ but the iconography is not one of domination. A cherub/sphinx figure and a worshipper (note the lifted hands) also appear on the seal, directly above the lion, but, given their placement, they are probably not to be seen as enthroned or riding on it. A cylinder seal from Akko is similar (**fig. 3.2**), though here the lions are presented somewhat more naturalistically, rising up to attack an animal of some sort (probably a bull), with one lion in front and the other behind. Their relationship with the four-winged goddess (?)²⁰ is not readily apparent.

A much clearer connection between the lion and the goddess is found on a bronze applique that was also found at Akko (**fig. 3.3**).²¹ On this piece, the

¹⁴ Ibid., 23.

¹⁵ Ibid. Cf. the many examples in Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit*, Katalog Band I: *Von Tell Abu Farağ bis Ḥatlit* (OBO.SA 13; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1997).

¹⁶ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 22. In addition to the examples in this work, see the seals from Tell el-Ḥajjūl catalogued by Keel (*Corpus I*, Tell el-Ḥajjūl Nrn. 78, 158, 816, 818, 1003, 1133, 1134, 1135, 1135, 1136, 1137, 1244).

¹⁷ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 51; Amnon Ben-Tor, “Hazor,” *OEANE* 3:3. On these orthostats, see further below.

¹⁸ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 56.

¹⁹ So *ibid.*

²⁰ So *ibid.*

²¹ See Keel, *Deine Blicke*, 43 and 133 Abb. 21; Ruth Hestrin, “The Cult Stand from Taḥanach and its Religious Background,” in *Studia Phoenicia V: Phoenicia and the East Mediterranean in the First Millennium B.C.: Proceedings of the Conference held in Leuven from the 14th to the 16th of November 1985* (ed. E. Lipiński; Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 68 and n. 17; and Sara Ben-Arieh and Gershon Edelstein, *Akko: Tombs Near the*

naked goddess stands on the back of a lion. This depiction is familiar from Egyptian New Kingdom exemplars and is generally called the *qudshu* type, as the inscription *qdš* (probably an epithet of the goddess: “Holiness”)²² is sometimes found on these stelae.²³ In actuality, the portrayal of “Qudshu”—perhaps to be identified with Asherah, at least on the Winchester relief (**fig. 4.256**)²⁴—on a lion is relatively rare in Palestine, though it also occurs on two recently found terra-cotta tablets from Tel Harashim (**fig. 3.4**).²⁵ It is difficult to know how much to make of the absence of the lion on most Palestinian exemplars: Albright thought that it was “accidental.”²⁶ However, further pieces have been found with the lion²⁷ and, indeed, even on those pieces that lack a lion, the placement of the figure’s feet may indicate that “at one time the lion was shown or understood as supporting the figure.”²⁸ If so, there would be yet further reasons to connect these presentations with Egyptian antecedents. The Akko piece is clearly Egyptianizing (note the Hathor-like headdress)²⁹ though one must always reckon with the possibility that Egyptian motifs might reflect

Persian Garden (PAtiqot 12; Jerusalem: Department of Antiquities and Museums, Ministry of Education and Culture, 1977), 29, Pl. VI:1–2.

- 22 Walter A. Maier, III, *ʾAŠERAH: Extrabiblical Evidence* (HSM 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 42–44, 90–96; William Foxwell Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (5th ed.; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 75, 78; idem, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 121; and *CMHE* 33.
- 23 See Maier, *ʾAŠERAH*, 82–83, and 27 n. 18 for a listing of photographs of these pieces. See, provisionally, *ANEP* 470–74 and the additional examples in Chapter 4 (e.g., **figs. 4.252–255**). Note also Izak Cornelius, “The Goddess Qedeshet in Syro-Palestinian Iconography,” *JNSL* 25 (1999): 241–55.
- 24 So Maier, *ʾAŠERAH*, 42–44 (cf. 90–96); *CMHE* 33; and I. E. S. Edwards, “A Relief of Qudshu-Astarte-Anath in the Winchester College Collection,” *JNES* 14 (1955): 49–51. The inscription identifies the goddess as “Qudshu-Astarte-Anath.” This, among other things, led Edwards to speculate that the artist “did not belong to the orthodox school and...was not completely familiar with the Egyptian script”—perhaps it was even a person of Semitic extraction (51 and n. 22; cf. 49 n. 3).
- 25 Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 66 and n. 7a, citing S. Giveon, “Tel ʾArashim,” *ʾAdašot Arkeologiyot* 97 (1991): 76 fig. 110.
- 26 Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 122. Edwards, “A Relief,” 49 notes an example from the British Museum (his Pl. IV), where the lion is omitted, but thinks this is probably because it “was merely a sculptor’s trial-piece”; therefore “no special significance attaches to the omission.”
- 27 Maier, *ʾAŠERAH*, 128 n. 21; 126 n. 14 cites three cases (from Ora Negbi, *Canaanite Gods in Metal* [Tel Aviv: Peli, 1976], 99, 99 fig. 118, and 100 fig. 119) in which the goddess stands on the back of a lion. The motif was also found on a gold sheet from Minet el-Beida much further north (Maier, *ʾAŠERAH*, 126 n. 14, and drawing 1; Keel, *Deine Blicke*, 133 Abb. 20 = **fig. 4.251**).
- 28 James B. Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines in Relation to Certain Goddesses Known Through Literature* (AOS 24; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1943), 42.
- 29 Keel, *Deine Blicke*, 133 Abb. 21; Maier, *ʾAŠERAH*, 84, 217–21.

or might have been mediated through Phoenicia.³⁰ Whatever the exact case, there can be little doubt that *qdš* is a goddess, as the association of deities on animal, especially lion, mounts has a long history in the Near East (see Chapter 4 §4.4.2). The lion here could thus symbolize the goddess' power and/or indicate that the lion is her sacred animal. "Qudshu" herself seems to be an erotic, sexual divinity of love, grace, beauty, and fertility.³¹ If so, the lion associated with her may be evoking (or deriving) the motifs of life and regeneration that Keel and Uehlinger have identified in the earlier MB materials.

Further connections between the lion and the goddess might be found on the Lachish ewer (**fig. 3.5**), which seems to include a lion (note the tail position) though the figure is unfortunately broken. If it is a lion, the scene is probably a naturalistic one (hunting caprids?) but is nevertheless connected with the goddess, especially via the inscription (to *l/t*) and the presence of the caprids and trees.³² The connotation of the lion here might be positive (especially given the caprid-flanked tree), but the possibility that the lion is hunting should not be missed.

Keel and Uehlinger argue that the lion is representative of the goddess on a rectangular clay stand from Megiddo (**fig. 3.6**), which depicts lion-flanked palm trees that stream water. They write: "Palms, caprids, lions, and doves are all part of the sphere in which the goddess exists."³³ If this stand is in fact a model for a temple tower that flanked one of the entrances of the "Fortified Temples" at Megiddo (as well as at Hazor and Shechem), "the lions would emphasize the aggressive side of the goddess."³⁴ Unfortunately, the iconography is not entirely clear.

The lion is also associated with the (male) *god* in the LB period.³⁵ A fourteenth-century cylinder seal from Beth-Shean (**fig. 3.7**) shows a figure in long skirt and conical hat (but without pharaonic tassels) in the smiting posture approaching two lions that are faced off. While the precise relationship

³⁰ Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 146.

³¹ Maier, *ASERAH*, 85.

³² Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 72. Note also in this regard the bone plaque from Tell Beit Mirsim showing a lion and a gazelle flanking a tree (F. S. Bodenheimer, *Animal and Man in Bible Lands* [2 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960–1972], 2:Pl. XXII B.5). For the inscription on the Lachish ewer, see Frank M. Cross, Jr., "The Evolution of the Proto-Canaanite Alphabet," *BASOR* 134 (1954): 15–24.

³³ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 58. One might compare the vase from Tell el-Farḥāh (S.). See Silvia Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder: Nachrichten von darstellender Kunst im Alten Testament* (OBO 74; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1987), 39 and 514 Abb. 12.

³⁴ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 58.

³⁵ It should be noted that, while Keel/Uehlinger write that the lion "belongs *exclusively* to the sphere of the goddess" (*Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 86; emphasis mine), their own work reveals that this does not indicate that the lion does not occur in other contexts or with other referents (see their illuss. 88, 89, 90, 99, 100, 101).

between this divine figure and the lions is not clear in this seal (though it seems adversarial), a cylinder seal from Akko (**fig. 3.8**) shows a god holding a lion aloft by its rear legs (a long-standing gesture of domination), ready to strike it. Very similar is a seal from Tell es-Safi (**fig. 3.9**), which shows a god lion-hunting: he grasps one lion by its tail and prepares to strike it, while another lion strides toward him from behind, with yet a third positioned vertically above the second. The iconography of the deity here is such that the god on these three seals should probably be identified with Seth or, perhaps better, Baal-Seth.³⁶ In the Tell es-Safi seal, where Baal-Seth also fights a horned snake, it would seem that “Baal-Seth’s battle is...a comprehensive war against everything that is inimical to life.”³⁷ The lion is thus part of that threat, comprising part of the chaos against which the god must struggle. Indeed, the lion *represents* that threat and chaos.

The same may be true for a seal from Tell el-ʿAjjul (**fig. 3.10**), though it is not altogether clear that it is Baal-Seth that is depicted here.³⁸ The overall meaning of the composition is uncertain,³⁹ but may show the god restraining a menacing lion, thereby protecting the human figure. Alternatively, the lion here may be the god’s familiar, as would be the horned animal at (in?) his left hand, both of which he would then be sending against the demon-figure that threatens the human figure. Whatever the exact identification, it seems clear that this godly figure “has become a champion against all evil”⁴⁰ and that the lion, at least at times, represents the evil forces over which the god must and, in this presentation, does triumph.

These god-like attributes are passed along to the *king* in various LB depictions as, for example, in a seal from Lachish (**fig. 3.11**), which shows the king, with bow, hunting the lion. But the king vs. lion motif can also transmogrify into the king *as* lion motif as is shown in those instances where the king’s “irresistible power...is depicted as...a lion that overpowers a human...or as a lion that tears a man apart.”⁴¹ In such cases, as in the seal from

³⁶ See Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 78; and, more extensively, Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baʿal: Late Bronze and Iron Age I Periods (c 1500–1000 BCE)* (OBO 140; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg, 1994). Raphael Giveon, *The Impact of Egypt on Canaan: Iconographical and Related Studies* (OBO 20; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1978), 97–98 argues that the figure in the Tell es-Safi seal (**fig. 3.9**) is Seth (not Baal) due to the hieroglyphic epithet that appears before him: *p^oty-b³*, “great of might.”

³⁷ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 78.

³⁸ *Contra* Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 78. However, Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baʿal*, 190–91 makes a case that it is Baal on the basis of the presence of the lock (cf. also 246–48).

³⁹ Contrast Keel’s earlier interpretation (which took the divine figure to be a goddess) in *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 83 fig. 96 with that of Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 78.

⁴⁰ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 78.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 82.

Tell el-Farḥah (S.) (**fig. 3.12**), the lion's awesome, threatening power is positively appropriated by the king.⁴² The king-as-lion may seem at odds with his portrayal as the hunter of lions, but both are old themes (see Chapter 4 §§4.3.1–4.3.2) and have to do with the semantics of the lion image as one ideally suited for both positive and negative appropriations. Hence, Keel and Uehlinger are certainly correct when they write: "It is only an *apparent* contradiction when the king's superiority is shown not by identifying him with the lion but rather when he is depicted overpowering a lion or an ibex....In these [latter] settings, the lion serves most likely as a metaphor for hostile foreigners."⁴³

Other images that associate the lion and the king include an ivory from Megiddo that shows a lion striding under (or alongside) a chariot (**fig. 3.13**). The thematic of a lion accompanying the king in war is familiar from Egypt, especially the Medinet Habu reliefs of Ramesses III (see **fig. 4.103**).⁴⁴ A scene from the famous ivory plaque from Megiddo (**fig. 3.14**; Stratum VIIA) shows a king or prince/chieftain returning victorious from battle (right side). Thereafter (on the left side), the king celebrates. Behind him stand two servants who apparently refill his drinking bowl. By these is a stand or shelf of some sort on which stand two heads: one of a lion and the other of a gazelle. These may be drinking vessels not unlike the lion-mug found at Tel Zeror (**fig. 3.15**). The composition betrays "considerable Egyptian influence."⁴⁵

Clearly, many of the images already discussed are dependent on or make use of the power (tenor) of the lion (vehicle) in their iconographical presentation. Other LB materials seem to be devoted primarily or exclusively to highlighting this aspect. An example might be the famous Beth-Shean stela (*ANEP* 228) from Stratum IX(A),⁴⁶ which depicts a lion and a lioness (or dog?) fighting (or playing?). The style is related to artistic schools of northern Syria and the Hittite kingdom.⁴⁷ Though the piece seems entirely naturalistic in subject matter, it was found in a public building adjacent to the cultic complex.⁴⁸ So, even this piece may be signifying more than a simple encounter between two animals, though the precise signification is now elusive.

There are a number of *cultic objects* or *cultic assemblages* that use or contain the lion image. An excellent example is the lion libation bowl from

⁴² Cf. Giv'eon's discussion of an earlier seal with similar connotation (*The Impact of Egypt on Canaan*, 84).

⁴³ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 82 (emphasis mine).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 62 and, further, Chapter 4 (§4.3.1.1).

⁴⁵ Rivka Gonen, "The Late Bronze Age," in Ben-Tor, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, 256.

⁴⁶ But contrast Kurt Galling, "Das Löwenrelief von Bethsean: Ein Werk des 8. Jahrhunderts," *ZDPV* 83 (1967): 125–31.

⁴⁷ Note the protruding tongue and the star on the shoulder. For the latter, see Excursus 2 note 1 and, further, Gonen, "The Late Bronze Age," 253.

⁴⁸ Amihai Mazar, "Beth-Shean (Tel Beth-Shean and the Northern Cemetery)," *NEAEHL* 1:214–33.

Tell Beit Mirsim, found in the debris of Stratum C (**fig. 3.16**) and ascribed to LB by the excavator, though Amiran has attempted to redate it to the 8th or 9th century.⁴⁹ Whatever the precise date, LB or IA II, this is some sort of libation tray, used in the cult, perhaps even in a temple nearby.

The presence of a lion on such a cult object may be evoking the divine connections of the lion; but it may also be drawing on the lion's *apotropaic function*. Such a function is nowhere more evident than on lion orthostats.⁵⁰ Several such LB orthostats have been recovered, the most famous of which belong to Hazor.

The first of the four lion orthostats found to date at Hazor comes from Area H, Stratum IB (**fig. 3.17**).⁵¹ The style, with the mane ending in a point and the tail between the rear leg and body, is characteristic of these reliefs and is related to orthostats from parts north.⁵² What is perhaps most fascinating about this particular orthostat is that it was thrown into a pit and apparently ceremoniously buried.⁵³ Ussishkin has studied this and related burials elsewhere and has concluded that such

ritual burial of gate-lions and royal statues points to their importance in the cult and beliefs of the Syro-Hittite world. The ritual burial seems to support the view that the gate-lions were not merely decorated orthostats meant to strengthen the superstructure of the gates in which they were incorporated, but, *as guardians of the gate were considered to possess godly, demonical, or punitive powers*.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Ruth Amiran, "The Lion Statue and the Libation Tray from Tell Beit Mirsim," *BASOR* 222 (1976): 29–40; see also idem, "A 'Lion Bowl' Made of Pottery," *Museum Haaretz Tel-Aviv* 14 (1972): 67–77. But contrast John S. Holladay, Jr.'s assessment of her re-dating of the Tell Beit Mirsim orthostat (see below) in "Religion in Israel and Judah Under the Monarchy: An Explicitly Archaeological Approach," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. Patrick D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 293–94 n. 125.

⁵⁰ See Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 28.

⁵¹ Yigael Yadin et al., *Hazor III–IV* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), Pl. CCCXXVIII; for *in situ* pictures see Pl. CXVIII–CXIX. The orthostat was found in Pit 2140 (Pl. CXX fig. 2). See also Yigael Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible* (New York: Random House, 1975), 104–109.

⁵² Yadin, *Hazor*, 105, 108. Cf. also Chapter 4.

⁵³ Ibid. 109; and Yigael Yadin, *Hazor: The Schweich Lectures 1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 86, 91; cf. 90 for Yadin's revised opinion that the orthostats belong to LB I "at the latest." The same sentiment is found in *Hazor: The Rediscovery*, 111–12.

⁵⁴ David Ussishkin, "The Syro-Hittite Ritual Burial of Monuments," *JNES* 29 (1970): 127 (emphasis mine). Three of the five burials Ussishkin treats are gate-lions.

Who might have buried the Hazor lion is open to question. Ussishkin opts for local people or priests, these “being the only ones to whom the monuments meant so much.”⁵⁵

Some forty years later, the mate to this orthostat was found (**fig. 3.18**), half a mile away, reused as a building stone in an eighth-century Israelite construction.⁵⁶ The great distance from the original has led Ben-Tor to wonder if there was more than one pair of lions at Hazor.⁵⁷ Whatever the case, it seems that this pair of lions (or a pair comprising one of these and another, missing mate)

may originally have flanked the entrance to a Canaanite temple in Hazor’s lower city....Or, perhaps, the statue was part of a second set of lions that once guarded Canaanite Hazor’s royal palace, the ruins of which lie beneath the Israelite building.⁵⁸

Another basalt orthostat, this one of a lioness (**fig. 3.19**), was found in Area A.⁵⁹ It is so similar in style to the other two that Yadin commented that they “must have been produced in the very same atelier, if not by the same artist.”⁶⁰ Another piece of this lioness was found in the recent Hazor investigations (again in a reused Israelite context) about fifty feet from the original find spot.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the mate of this lioness has not been found and thus there is at least one more lion missing, if these three are not in fact three half-pairs.⁶²

Yet another lion orthostat (**fig. 3.20**) was found in the famous temple (apparently devoted to a number of deities) of Area C, reused in the entranceway.⁶³ It was found under another stela and, moreover, had its carved

⁵⁵ Ussishkin, “The Syro-Hittite Ritual,” 128. Yadin, *Hazor*, 110, posits burial by conquerors or by survivors. Cf. idem, *Hazor: The Schweich Lectures*, 91, which deems burial by conquerors “less likely.”

⁵⁶ Amnon Ben-Tor and Maria Teresa Rubiato, “Excavating Hazor Part II: Did the Israelites Destroy the Canaanite City?,” *BAR* 25, no. 3 (May/June 1999): 34. Cf. Yadin, *Hazor: The Schweich Lectures*, 91 n. 6 for an interesting comment about the then-missing lion.

⁵⁷ Amnon Ben-Tor, “Big-Game Hunting: The Lion of Hazor,” *BAR* 24, no. 1 (January/February 1998): 44.

⁵⁸ Bonnie Rochman, “The Pride of Hazor: Lion Statue Regains Its Long-Lost Mate,” *BAR* 23, no. 5 (November/December 1997): 25. Yadin, *Hazor: The Schweich Lectures*, 95 speculates that the deity of the temple in Area H was the storm-god (Hadad).

⁵⁹ Yadin et al., *Hazor III–IV*, Pl. CCCXXIX; idem, *Hazor: The Rediscovery*, 109. William G. Dever, “Qedah, Tell El-,” *ABD* 5:578–81, states that the lioness was found in the “remains of the palace of Abdi-Tirshi” (580).

⁶⁰ Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery*, 109.

⁶¹ Ben-Tor and Rubiato, “Excavating Hazor,” 34.

⁶² Ben-Tor, “Big-Game Hunting,” 44. Ben-Tor raises the possibility that the lioness might have formed a pair with one of the lion orthostats but this female-male pair would be unusual and is, therefore, probably unlikely.

⁶³ Yadin et al., *Hazor I* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1958), 89; Yadin, *Hazor: The Schweich Lectures*, 74. For an *in situ* picture, see *Hazor I*, Pls. XXIX–XXXI. Yadin, *Hazor: The*

side turned in, facing the wall, so it was not in its original position. “Either it belonged to a different building and was buried here deliberately, or, more probably, it was an heirloom left behind from an earlier phase of the temple, where it likewise did not serve its original function.”⁶⁴ Whatever the case, the presence of so many lion orthostats indicates that they “must have been rather popular in Hazor.”⁶⁵

And not only there. A lion orthostat was also found in a LB stratum (C) at Tell Beit Mirsim (**fig. 3.21**). Amiran has argued that this find belongs to the 8th or 9th century, and thus to Stratum A.⁶⁶ Again, regardless of the exact date, Albright may be correct in suspecting that this lion was originally one of a pair that flanked the main entrance to a temple or that comprised part of a base for a cult statue (see **fig. 3.22** for a reconstruction).⁶⁷ Albright even speculated that the presence of this object (and the lion bowl from Tel Beit Mirsim discussed above) implied the presence of such a temple; but no such structure has yet been discovered. If this lion did form part of a base for a divine statue, there are two main differences from other exemplars: 1) the base is not a single-piece; and 2) it was probably square.⁶⁸ The rather small size of the lion may be further indication that it belonged to a cult statue rather than an entranceway. In contrast to the Hazor orthostats, there is little modeling. Hence, it and the libation bowl are probably to be “considered typical examples of provincial art with its various cultural connotations.”⁶⁹

The function of orthostats such as these is well summarized by Gonen, who states (with reference to the Hazor lions) that they “prove that the lion was of particular significance in the conceptual world of the people of the Late Bronze Age, perhaps as a symbol of potent protective power.”⁷⁰ But, despite the impressive evidence of these large finds and their obvious apotropaic function, one should not forget that even the smallest of artifacts might have

Schweich Lectures, 72 notes the similarities with the Area A lion which confirms a contemporaneous dating.

⁶⁴ Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery*, 48; cf. Yadin et al., *Hazor I*, 89.

⁶⁵ Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery*, 109.

⁶⁶ Amiran, “The Lion Statue,” 36.

⁶⁷ William Foxwell Albright, *The Excavations at Tell Beit Mirsim II: The Bronze Age* (AASOR 17; New Haven: ASOR, 1938), 65–68; Amiran, “The Lion Statue,” 31; Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 77. Albright thought specifically of a goddess.

⁶⁸ Amiran, “The Lion Statue,” 31. Cf., e.g., the orthostats at Tel Halaf (see **figs. 4.260, 4.303**).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷⁰ Gonen, “The Late Bronze Age,” 252. In addition to Hazor and Tell Beit Mirsim, one should note the basalt lion orthostat found at Sheikh Sāḥād in the western Golan east of lake Tiberias/Galilee (**fig. 3.23**). Hugo Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder zum Alten Testament* (2d ed.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927), 115 dates the piece broadly (1500–1000) and comments that the style is “hethitisch” (116). Others have preferred a date nearer to the latter part of that spectrum.

played a similar role. Such may be the case, for instance, with the small lion amulet from Tell el-Farḥah (S.) (**fig. 3.24**).⁷¹

The exalted use of the lion as a protective figure did not prevent it from being used as a primary motif on more mundane objects, for example, the bronze lion (weight?) from Hazor (**fig. 3.25**);⁷² the ivory comb (**fig. 3.26**), gameboard (**fig. 3.27**), and box (**fig. 3.28**) from Megiddo; or the various LB scarabs and seals showing the lion with flower (**fig. 3.29**, Tell el-ḥAjjul), scorpion (**fig. 3.30**, Tell el-ḥAjjul), scorpion and sun-disk (**fig. 3.31**, Akko), ankh (**fig. 3.32**, Aseka), or ankh and sun-disk (**fig. 3.33**, Ashdod). Even on these objects, however, an apotropaic function or divine connection might be at work, at least on a secondary level (especially in the case of the scarabs).⁷³

3.3. IRON AGE I (1200–925)

In IA I, the lion is still used in connection with deities—both male and female. Perhaps the clearest reference to a lion and a *goddess*—indeed, a lion(ess)-goddess—is found in the inscriptions of the el-Khadr arrowheads, which contain the PN *ḥbd/ḥbt* (see §3.7). Iconographical depictions are, unfortunately, less straightforward. Keel and Uehlinger interpret a seal from Megiddo (**fig. 3.34**), which shows a lion above a mother animal suckling her young, as evoking the goddess.⁷⁴ This might be challenged, however, and—given the increasing association of the lion with various male deities in IA⁷⁵—one wonders if the lion might represent a male deity with the mother-suckling-young motif representing the female goddess. Much clearer associations with

⁷¹ But cf. Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, 538, who states “Neben der apotropäischen Bedeutung spielte im Bereich der Amulette wahrscheinlich auch jene der Regeneration...eine wichtige Rolle.”

⁷² Found in the residential Area F. See Yadin et al., *Hazor II* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 159 and Pls. CL and CXCVI; Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery*, 62. The piece bears some similarity to the orthostat from Area C. A similar piece was found in Megiddo Stratum VIII. It may be a weight (*Hazor II*, 159).

⁷³ E.g., note the twigs/branches on the Megiddo comb (for the significance of the twig, see Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit. Einleitung* [OBO.SA 10; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1995], 196). Cf. Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 10: “Even those objects from a material culture that serve a purely functional role can be or at least might be an expression of certain religious concepts and elements of faith if they are found in contexts where they serve a specific religious function.” One might also note the lion-shaped scarab from LB Lachish (Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 71).

⁷⁴ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 143; cf. also 144. For the mother-suckling-young motif, see Othmar Keel, *Das Böcklein in der Milch seiner Mutter und Verwandtes* (OBO 33; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1980).

⁷⁵ Note the corresponding decrease in depictions of the goddess in this period. See, e.g., Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 141–43 for a discussion of the lack of the “Mistress of Animals” motif in ancient Israel/Palestine. Even when it is present, Keel/Uehlinger think that it “is due to Phoenician influence” (143).

the lion and the goddess are found on some of the cult objects stemming from IA I (see below).

The image of the lion on objects venerating *male gods* is quite obvious on the seals (some pyramidal) from Tel Gerisa (**figs. 3.35–36**), Lachish (**fig. 3.37**), Tell es-Sabidiyeh (**fig. 3.38**), Beth-Shean (**fig. 3.39**), Pella (**fig. 3.40**), Megiddo (**figs. 3.41–42**), Beth-Shemesh (**figs. 3.43–44**) and Qarn Hayyin (**fig. 3.45**) that venerate the god Amun.⁷⁶ This deity's name is often inscribed on these seals, sometimes in traditional fashion, and sometimes by using the lion cryptographically.⁷⁷ In either case, the lion in these contexts is “to be understood as part of Egyptian royal iconography.”⁷⁸ Perhaps the cryptographic writing with the lion is intended to portray Amun both “as the ‘hidden one’ and as the one who had the power of a lion.”⁷⁹ Mass-produced goods such as these that venerate Amun are, in the main, restricted to the coastal plains, but the cult of Amun may nevertheless have influenced the cults of Canaanite El and/or Yahweh.⁸⁰

Egyptian influence on Canaanite Baal is also probable, as shown by pyramidal seals and scarabs of the IA I period, where Baal-Seth is often found riding on a lion (**fig. 3.46**; Megiddo), sometimes with Reshef (**figs. 3.47–49**; Tell el-Farḥah [S.], Lachish, and Tell Keisan, respectively).⁸¹ Keel and Uehlinger have argued that the lion “on which he stands in such settings is not his attribute animal, but his opponent...probably to be identified as Mot.”⁸² However, the evidence for such an identification is minimal, and, while it is true that the motif of deities riding on animals often signifies their triumph

⁷⁶ See Othmar Keel, “Conceptions religieuses dominantes en Palestine/Israël entre 1750 et 900,” in *Congress Volume: Paris 1992* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 61; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 129. Keel, *Corpus I*, would add Ahsib Nrn. 15, 104; El-Ahwat Nr. 2; and Akko Nrn. 139, 142, as further examples.

⁷⁷ Keel, “Conceptions religieuses,” 129; Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 111 (who also mention an unprovenanced seal with the same writing but with a winged god with horned cap and tassel who stands upon a lion); Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 72, 242; Keel, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel Band IV* (OBO 135; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1994), 32, 37–40; Othmar Keel/Menakhem Shuval/Christoph Uehlinger, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel III* (OBO 100; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1990), 348–51, 406–407.

⁷⁸ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 113.

⁷⁹ Ibid. Cf. Keel, “Conceptions religieuses,” 129 (and see fig. 40): “Le lion est en même temps une métaphore pour la supériorité et la royauté d’Amon.”

⁸⁰ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 113–14.

⁸¹ Keel, “Conceptions religieuses,” 129; Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 195–208, 262. A scarab with a similar depiction is found in Keel, *Corpus I*, Aschdod Nr. 54. On the piece from Lachish (**fig. 3.48**), see Cornelius, *Iconography*, 201–202. Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, imply incorrectly that it is from Tell el-Farḥah (S.).

⁸² Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 114. Cf. Keel, “Conceptions religieuses,” 129: The motif “signifie le triomphe de Baal-Seth sur le lion.”

over, or vanquishing and subduing of, the animal in question, distinctive iconographical clues to such effect (e.g., the presence of a nose rope or leash) are missing on these depictions. Moreover, other divine figures on lions (e.g., Qudshu) are not interpreted similarly by Keel and Uehlinger.⁸³ One might compare, further, several seals collected by Cornelius that appear to show Baal with the lion as an attribute animal, not as foe: for example, the seal from Tell el-Farḥah (S.) (**fig. 3.50**) and the scarab from Akko (**fig. 3.51**).⁸⁴ An adversarial interpretation identifying the lion with Mot is, therefore, unlikely in my judgment.⁸⁵

Another motif found on some objects from IA I Israel/Palestine that may have divine connotations is that of the bull as the vanquisher of the lion or lioness. Pieces bearing such a presentation may include the ivories from Megiddo (**fig. 3.52**) and Lachish (**fig. 3.53**), though the broken context precludes certainty. Much clearer is the seal in the form of a bull's head from Tell el-Farḥah (S.) (**fig. 3.54**), as well as a seal from Tell Keisan (**fig. 3.55**). Commenting on the unusual nature of this motif in Palestine, Keel and Uehlinger write:

The lion is usually the victor. This suggests that the image does not represent just any ordinary fight between two powerful animals but should be associated with a battle between two divine powers. The aggressive bull probably represents the weather god Baal and the lion that lies below is likely Mot, the god of summer drought.⁸⁶

Unfortunately, they cite no evidence to support such a conclusion, though elsewhere Keel has compared a seal from Carchemish that shows a (weather?) god on top of a bull spearing a lion (**fig. 4.216**).⁸⁷ Without further evidence, the possibility must remain that the bull-over-lion motif is simply a naturalistic

⁸³ For Qudshu on the lion, see above and, further, Chapter 4 (§4.4.2). Keel/Uehlinger do point out that Baal-Seth on the lion may be an appropriation of the goddess' role as *qudshu*—otherwise virtually absent in IA I iconography (*Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 114). Keel has pointed out (personal communication) that the tradition-history of the images in question, Qudshu and Baal-Seth on lions, probably indicates that the relationship of each deity to the lion is different. For the Baal-Seth's antagonistic relationship with the lion, see **fig. 3.9** above.

⁸⁴ See Cornelius, *Iconography*, 195–208, especially 205, who identifies the gods on the Akko seal as Baal (on the lion) and Reshef (on the gazelle).

⁸⁵ But see further Chapter 4 (§4.4.3.4) for some textual evidence from Ugarit that describes Mot with leonine metaphors. The description is quite brief and restricted specifically to Mot's appetite and to "desert lions" (*lbnm thw*).

⁸⁶ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 144–46, cf. 118; Keel, "Conceptions religieuses," 130; idem, "Ancient Seals and the Bible," *JAOS* 106 (1986): 309.

⁸⁷ Keel, "Conceptions religieuses," fig. 45; idem, *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden: Drei Fallstudien zur Methode der Interpretation altorientalischer Bilder* (OBO 122; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1992), Abb. 166. Note also his discussion of the bull with "kämpferischem Charakter" (*ibid.*, 175–79). See further Chapter 4.

depiction, albeit highly stylized.⁸⁸ However, the unlikely correspondence of such a scene with the reality of the natural world where the lion is the more advanced predator—unlikely to be threatened greatly in the wild by bulls⁸⁹—when coupled with the long associations of the bull with Canaanite deities (especially El), may tip the balance toward Keel and Uehlinger’s interpretation of the bull as a divine symbol. Whether that indicates that the lion, too, represents a deity and which one, however, is far from certain. Here, too, that is, the lion could be representative of threat and chaos in general, not an epitome of a particular deity. Whatever the case, the motif of bull-attacking-lion seems to be “a typical northern Syrian motif.”⁹⁰

The lion “striding over and away from some individual or else attacking a caprid from behind”—a depiction of the *king* according to Keel—is frequent in IA I.⁹¹ The lion-attacking-caprid motif is found on scarabs from Tel Masos (fig. 3.56), Ashdod (fig. 3.57), and Megiddo (fig. 3.58), while the lion-attacking-human motif, which is very popular in IA I,⁹² can be found on seals from Akko (fig. 3.59), Beersheba (fig. 3.60), Tell Keisan (fig. 3.61) Megiddo (fig. 3.62), and Tel Rekeš (fig. 3.63). On seals from Aseka (fig. 3.64) and Megiddo (fig. 3.65), the lion is superior to a crocodile,⁹³ while another seal from Ashdod (fig. 3.66) shows the lion as the uppermost animal above a horse and a bull (?). In contrast to earlier periods (cf., e.g., fig. 3.12), however, iconographic details are missing that would permit a clear and exclusive

⁸⁸ Cf. Keel, *Das Recht*, 176 who, when speaking of the Lachish and Megiddo ivories, writes: “Wahrscheinlich handelt es sich bei diesen Elfenbeinschnitzereien einfach um die Darstellung von Tierkämpfen, bei denen primär des dramatische Aufeinanderprallen [*sic*] zweier gewaltiger Mächte interessiert.”

⁸⁹ See George B. Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion: A Study of Predator-Prey Relations* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1972), who states that, as an adult, the lion “has no mammalian enemies other than man and members of its own species” (183). Still, from time to time, lions are killed by: 1) other predators, though these usually hunt in packs (e.g., hyena and wild dogs); 2) other lions; 3) buffalo and elephants, though this is typically true only for lion *cubs* (188–89). Occasionally, “[c]areless and inexperienced lions may be crippled or killed by the horns or hooves of the prey” that they are attacking (189). Moreover, “[s]able, roan, kudu, and buffalo have all been known to gore lions,” as has the rhinoceros (189–90). Unfortunately, comparisons of the lion with cattle in general, and bulls in particular, are not found in Schaller’s work, which deals with the Serengeti. Still, similar conclusions are obviously in order here as well.

⁹⁰ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 146.

⁹¹ Ibid., 120; Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 196–97. There is an example of a caprid over a lion on a scarab from Akko (Keel, *Corpus I*, Akko Nr. 141), but this is rather unusual. The typical order is lion over caprid (see Keel, *Corpus I*, Akko Nr. 135). See also Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, Abb. 360 for a highly unusual MB scarab showing a lion striding over a female figure. The piece may have erotic overtones (ibid., 196 and 198).

⁹² Keel, *Studien IV*, 42, which also mentions a similar seal from Cyprus. Keel observes that the human head in these seals is always underneath the lion’s head, except for a piece from Pella where the head lies between the rear legs of the lion.

⁹³ Keel is not sure what the crocodile symbolizes: “Ein scheint sich jedenfalls um einen Akt der Domination zu handeln” (*Corpus: Einleitung*, 198).

identification of the lion as the pharaoh.⁹⁴ It would seem, then, that the earlier relationship with Egyptian royal iconography (see above) “was lost gradually, so that this depiction became a popular motif associated with *triumph in general*....The theme might also simply be a way to show a *high level of aggressiveness* that the person owning the image wanted to possess.”⁹⁵ If so, that aggressiveness is multiplied in seals that portray an archer in combat against human figures where the lion is also present (**figs. 3.67–68**; Tell el-Farḥah [S.]). Keel and Uehlinger think that the lions on such depictions also represent the king’s enemy/target.⁹⁶ But, as the lion seems to have replaced the chariot in the typological developments of such seals,⁹⁷ this may be the lion striding into battle with the king (note the direction *toward* the human foe) *à la* Ramesses III (see **fig. 4.103** and further Chapter 4 §4.3.1.1) and the Megiddo ivory (**fig. 3.13**). If so, the lion would be the *companion* of the king, not his enemy. This seems to be the case in two scarabs from Akko where the lion sits before the king/archer but faces the enemy (**figs. 3.69–70**) and perhaps in a scarab from Ashkelon where the lion strides toward the human figure (**fig. 3.71**).⁹⁸ Alternatively, in Keel and Uehlinger’s view, the lion comprises part of the archetypal threat (along with the foreign foe) that the king must battle.⁹⁹ Both perspectives are dependent on the power of the lion as predator and potential threat (see Chapter 2). The latter interpretation is certainly at work on some seals, as, for instance, in a piece from Tell el-ʿAjjul (**fig. 3.72**) as well as two from Akko (**figs. 3.73–74**), the latter of which shows the king shooting a lion that has trampled a human figure.¹⁰⁰

A number of fascinating *cult objects* from IA I employ the lion. A striking example of the use of an actual lion within a cultic structure was found in the Jaffa “Lion Temple.” Here, on the floor of a pre-Philistine Temple belonging to Level III, the skull of a lion was found.¹⁰¹ Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan have taken

⁹⁴ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 130.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 120 (emphasis mine); cf. 130: the “pharaoh-as-lion imagery is generalized now and becomes symbolic of deliberate aggressiveness.”

⁹⁶ Ibid., 122; cf. Keel, “Conceptions religieuses,” 130. For the same motif on a scarab from Akko, see Keel, *Corpus I*, Akko Nr. 87.

⁹⁷ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 120; cf. illuss. 146a–b.

⁹⁸ Cf. also the pyramidal seal from Ashkelon (Keel, *Corpus I*, Ashkelon Nr. 83) that depicts the king in battle on a chariot on the bottom, while the side is decorated with, among other things, a striding lion.

⁹⁹ But see Keel’s comments on Akko Nr. 85 (= **fig. 3.69**) in *Corpus I*, 560: “es ist nicht ganz klar, ob Löwe und Capride gleichzeitig Jagdobjekte sind oder ob der Löwe als Jagdhelfer zu verstehen ist.”

¹⁰⁰ One might also note the IA I seals that show lions in “packs” of sorts—that is, two lions striding together (see Keel, *Corpus I*, Afek Nr. 41; Akko Nrn. 90, 91, 126). Akko Nr. 90 makes it clear that such presentations relate to the lion’s *hunt*. The single-lion variety is also attested in IA I (Akko Nr. 277).

¹⁰¹ See J. Kaplan, “Jaffa 1972–1973,” *IEJ* 24 (1974): 135–36; Jacob Kaplan and Haya Ritter-Kaplan, “Jaffa,” *NEAEHL* 2:655–59, especially 658 (picture on 656). See also William G. Dever, “The Contribution of Archaeology to the Study of Canaanite and Early Israelite

this as proof that a lion cult of some sort was practiced here.¹⁰² Unfortunately, further details about such a cult, or the deity(ies) to whom it was dedicated, are not forthcoming.¹⁰³ Indeed, some have questioned whether the site is a shrine at all, while others have questioned Kaplan's chronology of the site, with the result that the lion skull might belong to LB II.¹⁰⁴

More certain in chronology, if not in actual function, is a lion-shaped rhyton from Tell Qasile Stratum XI (**fig. 3.75**). The style of this piece reflects Aegean connections,¹⁰⁵ and should be connected with either the Philistine or Sea Peoples. Even so, the fact that it stems from the temple at Tell Qasile (more specifically from a pit for cultic offerings),¹⁰⁶ as well as the existence of several parallels from Tel Zeror (**fig. 3.15**), Megiddo, Tell es-Safi, and Tel Gerisa,¹⁰⁷ demonstrates the importance of the lion image in various IA I cults of Israel/Palestine.

That assessment receives further support from three IA I cult stands with leonine imagery. The twelfth-century stand from Beth-Shean¹⁰⁸ (**fig. 3.76**) is,

Religion," in Miller, Hanson, and McBride, *Ancient Israelite Religion*, 209–47, especially 230. Dever dates the temple variously (223: LBI–II; 230: LB–Iron I; 232: evidently reused from LBII in Iron I). A damaged scarab was found near the lion's teeth, the reconstruction of which yielded the name of Queen Tiyy, wife of Amenhotep III. But Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan do not think this is definitive of the date of the site as "scarabs of kings of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth dynasties continued in use as talismans or jewelry for generations afterward, and therefore they cannot serve as evidence for dating" ("Jaffa," 2:658). Paula Wapnish, "Lions," *OEANE* 3:361 notes that "[t]he right mandible has two sets of deep cut marks that are consistent with opening the oral cavity from the basal surface of the jaws while leaving the head attached to the skin." She also notes a lion-mandible fragment from IA I Dan and two lion bones "associated with Iron I pottery in a noncultic Iron II building" at Tel Mique-Ekron (*ibid.*).

¹⁰² Kaplan and Ritter-Kaplan, "Jaffa," 2:658. They cite the GNs Laish (Dan), ha-Kefira, and Beth-Levaot as further evidence for the existence of such a cult (see Chapter 2 and Appendix 1).

¹⁰³ William G. Dever, "Recent Archaeological Confirmation of the Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel," *Hebrew Studies* 23 (1982): 37–43, especially 40; and *idem*, "Asherah, Consort of Yahweh?: New Evidence from Kuntillet Ajrud," *BASOR* 255 (1984): 33 n. 24 has argued for Asherah as the candidate.

¹⁰⁴ J. P. Dessel, "Jaffa," *OEANE* 3:206–207.

¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Bloch-Smith and Beth Alpert Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life: The Iron Age I," *NEA* 62 (1999): 102.

¹⁰⁶ Amihai Mazar, "Tell Qasile (Excavations in Area C)," *NEAEHL* 4:1208; *idem*, "The Iron Age I," in Ben-Tor, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, 276.

¹⁰⁷ See Yigael Yadin, "New Gleanings on Resheph from Ugarit," in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (ed. Ann Kort and Scott Morschauer; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 259–74.

¹⁰⁸ So Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 84, though they include it in their chapter on the LB age. Othmar Keel, *Vögel als Boten: Studien zu Ps 68,12–14, Gen 8,6–12, Koh 10,20 und dem Aussenden von Botenvögeln in Ägypten* (OBO 14; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1977), 49 Abb. 7 and Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder*, 193 and Abb. 672 on Pl. CCLVII, both give a thirteenth-century date.

despite the reconstruction, quite fragmentary. Various human figures are represented, as are snakes and a lion (perhaps a lioness).¹⁰⁹ Keel and Uehlinger posit that the long-standing connection between the lion and the goddess permits one to identify the figures on this stand as females (goddesses?) because the lion “belongs exclusively to the sphere of the goddess.”¹¹⁰ But an “exclusive” connection between the lion and the goddess has already been challenged above; it need not be repeated here. Regardless, however, the state of this particular cult stand seems too broken to bear much interpretive weight.¹¹¹ A better case might be made for the two cult stands from Taanach.

The first of these (Stand A; **fig. 3.77**)¹¹² has been the subject of much debate, most of which has revolved around the identification of the animal in the fourth, topmost register and which god or goddess (if any) it might represent. The options are basically two: the animal is a bull(-calf), perhaps representing Baal, or the animal is a horse, perhaps representing Anat-Astarte.¹¹³

The first and third registers are important here as they both depict lions. On the lowest frieze a naked goddess stands between two upright lions. The hands of her outstretched arms touch the lions’ ears. “As there is no sign of a mane, it stands to reason that these animal figures were meant to represent lionesses.”¹¹⁴ These lionesses have their mouths open, revealing teeth and protruding tongues. The third register depicts the sacred tree, flanked by caprids, which are in turn flanked by two more lionesses virtually identical to the others, though somewhat shorter in length.

Hestrin has argued that the square shape of Stand A indicates that it represented a shrine.¹¹⁵ Keel and Uehlinger concur and offer an interpretation of the three-dimensional piece as a portrayal of “graded sacredness,” with each register depicting part of the shrine: outside/wilderness (register 1), entrance

¹⁰⁹ Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder*, 193: “Löwin.”

¹¹⁰ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 86.

¹¹¹ Still, if the figures are female and are goddesses, the connection with a *female* lion may be of some interest.

¹¹² See Paul W. Lapp, “The 1968 Excavations at Tell Tabannek,” *BASOR* 195 (1969): 2–49.

¹¹³ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 158–60; Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 39; Ruth Hestrin, “The Cult Stand,” 77: “To sum up, Baʿal, the young bull, is certainly the centre of the whole composition.” J. Glen Taylor has interpreted Stand A “Yahwistically.” See his *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel* (JSOTSup 111; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); idem, “The Two Earliest Known Representations of Yahweh,” in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie* (ed. Lyle Eslinger and J. Glen Taylor; JSOTSup 67; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 557–66. For a recent assessment of this stand, see Patrick D. Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 43–45. He deems Taylor’s interpretation “rather dubious” (45).

¹¹⁴ Hestrin, “The Cult Stand,” 65.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

(register 2), holy place (register 3), inner sanctum/cella (register 4).¹¹⁶ In their opinion, the deity honored is Anat-Astarte.¹¹⁷ Most other scholars, however, have connected friezes 1 and 3 with Asherah.¹¹⁸

The second stand (Stand B; **fig. 3.78**) also depicts lions arranged in pairs above one another, along with cherubs; these should probably be interpreted as guardian animals.¹¹⁹ Given that this stand also contains a caprid-flanked tree, Keel and Uehlinger think that “[t]he house cult in which this stand was used might...have been dedicated to the worship of the goddess (Asherah).”¹²⁰ But they also argue that the stand may have honored Baal “who is shown on the right side of the stand below the middle sphinx.”¹²¹ This second option is less likely, however, given the composition, which would seem to indicate that Baal is not “the object of direct veneration by the cult; it suggests rather a certain subordination of that god.”¹²²

Here, then, as was also the case with Stand A, the exact significance of Stand B and its identification with a certain deity (or deities) remains uncertain, though both stands probably functioned as supports for bowls used to hold libations or gifts.¹²³ Yet whatever the exact function of the stand or identity of the god or goddess (or both), the lions depicted apparently serve as guardian and/or attribute animals. In either case, the lions “underscored the aggressive aspect” of the deity (or deities) in question.¹²⁴

Lastly, there are a number of IA I objects that might have played some sort of cultic role but, equally as likely, may have served a more profane use. The first example is the “Orpheus” jug from Megiddo (**fig. 3.79**), which does not draw on the threatening tenor of the lion at all, or, if it does, does so in a

¹¹⁶ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 157–58.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹¹⁸ E.g., Dever, “Recent Archaeological Confirmation,” 40; *idem*, “Asherah, Consort of Yahweh?,” 33 n. 24; Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 76; Hestrin, “The Cult Stand,” 71: “To sum up the scene in the bottom register—the naked female represents here the mother-goddess Asherah, accompanied by two lions.” The tree in the third register “represented the goddess ʾĒlat, the Ugaritic ʾAšrat, as the Lachish ewer proves” (*ibid.*, 74). “Thus the stand was intended for the worship of Baʿal and Asherah, probably in a shrine at Taʿanach” (*ibid.*). Much of Hestrin’s identification with Asherah depends on connections with *qudshu* and Hathor. On this, cf. Maier, *ʾAŠERAH*, 168: “In the writer’s opinion the representation [in the first frieze] definitely belongs to the Qudšu type.” Hence, Maier thinks that the stand probably attests to “both the continued existence of the Qudšu type in northern Palestine into the early first millennium B.C., and probably also the worship of ʾAšerah at Taanach” (*ibid.*).

¹¹⁹ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 155. Cf. Hestrin, “The Cult Stand,” 74 (on Stand A). Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder*, 114–15 dates Stand B to the 7th century (see also Abb. 396–97 on Pl. CLIX).

¹²⁰ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 155.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, 155–57.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 154–55.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

subversive, reversing way not unlike certain eschatological usages of the lion discussed in Chapter 2 (§2.4).¹²⁵ The second example is the small ivory roaring-lion head from Tel Masos (**fig. 3.80**).¹²⁶ This piece is of some interest in that it falls in the period between larger, more important ivory finds and also because it probably stems from the north, perhaps Phoenicia, and is therefore an example of contact between sites in the Negeb and sites north.¹²⁷ As for function, it is important to note that the lion was found “in the cultic room in area H.”¹²⁸ Finally, there are a number of lion-shaped scaraboids from the IA I (and IA II) period.¹²⁹

3.4. IRON AGE II (925–586)

IA II witnesses a decline in portrayals of the goddess, with lions or otherwise.¹³⁰ There is an image of a “Lord” or “Mistress” of lions on a seal from Hazor (**fig. 3.81**)¹³¹ though the precise identification of the animals subdued is indeterminate as is the gender of the figure. However, “since no female deities are depicted in [Palestinian] glyptic art during Iron Age IIB, it is...likely that this is a ‘lord.’”¹³² Indeed, one of the only images that might be associated with the goddess—and this too is not completely certain—is lion H on Pithos A from Kuntillet Ajrud (**fig. 3.82**).¹³³ The interpretation of this pithos, the interpretation of Pithos B, and the relationship of the images to the inscriptions also found there, have been much discussed.¹³⁴ Many scholars

¹²⁵ Keel/Uehlinger speak of the lyre player “portrayed coming forth from a fairy-tale world” (ibid., 123).

¹²⁶ Frank Crüsemann, “Der Löwenkopf von œirbet el-Mš%—ein Elfenbeinfund aus der frühen Eisenzeit,” in ספר הנדטורף (Sefer Rendtorff): Festschrift zum 50. Geburtstag von Rolf Rendtorff (ed. Konrad Rupprecht; Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament Beiheft 1; Dielheim: Selbstverlag der Autoren, 1975), 9–23. See 16 n. 19 for another lion head, this one a local product, found in the same area.

¹²⁷ Crüsemann, “Der Löwenkopf,” 10–13; see also Volkmar Fritz, “Masos, Tel,” *OANE* 3:437–38; Aharon Kempinski, “Masos, Tell,” *NEAEHL* 3:989.

¹²⁸ Kempinski, “Masos, Tell,” 3:988.

¹²⁹ See Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 71–72.

¹³⁰ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 278.

¹³¹ Cf. the similar, unprovenanced piece bought in Jericho (Hildi Keel-Leu, *Vorderasiatische Stempelsiegel: Die Sammlung des Biblischen Instituts der Universität Freiburg Schweiz* [OBO 110; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1991], 68 Nr. 79).

¹³² Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 184; cf. 186.

¹³³ Othmar Keel has noted the connections between the presentation of the stylized tree, lion, and palmette here to that on **fig. 3.108** (personal communication). As both the lion and the palmette have long-standing connections to the goddess, a goddess-connection at Kuntillet Ajrud may be more likely in this light.

¹³⁴ E.g., Dever, “Recent Archaeological Confirmation,” 37–43; idem, “Asherah, Consort of Yahweh?,” 21–37 is among those that assume that the inscriptions should be connected with the images, but contrast Pirhiya Beck, “The Drawings from ʔOrvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʔAjrud),” *Tel Aviv* 9 (1982): 3–68; Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 210–48; and Maier, *ʔAŠERAH*. The latter thinks such a connection is

have argued that the Bes-figures and lyre-player represent Yahweh, “his Asherah,” and a worshipper, or some combination thereof.¹³⁵ The most extensive art-historical discussions have been those of Beck and Keel and Uehlinger who are agreed that the many different images on the pithoi do not reflect a coherent composition, but are the product of a multitude of paintings and painters.¹³⁶ Even so, Keel and Uehlinger have agreed with Hestrin who argued that lion H on Pithos A is part of the composition with the caprid-flanked tree.¹³⁷ The tail of this lion hangs down, not unlike the lions on the *qudshu* presentations (cf., e.g., **figs. 4.251–256**) and thus it would appear to be, not one of the guardian-lion types (see below), but rather a lion-mount. In this case, the lion carries the caprid-tree image—a long-standing image of the goddess in the Near East and ancient Israel/Palestine.¹³⁸ While it is possible that the artist was an Israelite, Keel and Uehlinger think it “improbable.”¹³⁹ It is more likely that, given the constellation of imagery, the paintings “derive largely from Syro-Phoenician hands.”¹⁴⁰ Finally, it should be noted that there is

“precarious. Such a connection may not, in fact, have existed” (170). See also Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, 31–32, 44, 229 n. 142, 231 n. 154.

- ¹³⁵ Unfortunately, Dever does not cite evidence to support some of his opinions in “Recent Archaeological Confirmation” and “Asherah, Consort of Yahweh?,” and some of the evidence he does cite is contrary to his conclusions: e.g., the presence of lyres being played by musicians *before* a king or deity not *by* such (cf. “Asherah, Consort of Yahweh?,” 24); he gives no examples of goddesses playing for gods. Neither Beck or Keel/Uehlinger have followed Dever.
- ¹³⁶ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 212 and n. 44; Beck, “The Drawings,” 43, 45–47.
- ¹³⁷ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 217; Ruth Hestrin, “The Lachish Ewer and the Asherah,” *IEJ* 37 (1987): 212–23. See also Othmar Keel, *Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh: Ancient Near Eastern Art and the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 261; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 42; Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 38–39; Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, 44.
- ¹³⁸ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 217, 233: the lion and caprid tree are associated with the goddess “without the goddess having to make an actual appearance as a personal power.” Contrast Maier, who does not believe Asherah is present at Kuntilet Ajrud (*BAŠERAH*, 172); Beck, “The Drawings,” 17–18. An interesting example of a lion carrying a (divine) symbol rather than a divinity proper is found in a much later Coptic piece in Cairo which depicts a lion carrying a Greek cross between its shoulders. See Anne Vollgraff-Roes, “The Lion with Body Markings in Oriental Art,” *JNES* 12 (1953): 43 and n. 18, citing Josef Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst* (Vienne: A. Holzhausen, 1904), 94 fig. 138.
- ¹³⁹ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 217.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 278; Dever, “Asherah, Consort of Yahweh?,” 26, 31; and especially Beck, “The Drawings,” 27, 44. Beck points out that lion H may have a protruding tongue (17). If so, this is “one of his most significant features because it is typical of the Hittite and Neo-Hittite lions up till the last third of the 8th century”; hence, “[t]he artist who painted lion H...and lion C had probably seen representations of animals in the style prevailing in southern Anatolia and northern Syria, where this specific type of lion was in vogue” (*ibid.*).

also an image of a lioness (C; also with protruding tongue) attacking a boar on Pithos A, and also what appears to be the raised tail (of a lion?), not unlike the tails of guardian lions (see below), on Pithos B (**fig. 3.83**).¹⁴¹ Given the incoherent nature of the compositions, neither of these latter lions seems to be related to lion H and the caprid-tree on Pithos A. So, even in what is one of the clearest associations of the lion with the goddess in IA II, the connection is not as obvious as it might be, and, furthermore, may be extra-Israelite in origin.

A much clearer connection between the lion and the goddess than that found on the pithoi from Kuntillet Ajrud is evident on the electron pendant found in Stratum IB (destroyed in 603) at Tel Miqne-Ekron (**fig. 3.84**). The piece is Assyrian in style,¹⁴² and depicts a goddess, probably Ishtar, on a lion with a worshipper standing before her.¹⁴³ The pendant attests a close relationship between a (well-known) goddess and the lion (see further Chapter 4 §4.4), and may be an import, though the (poor) quality of the piece could indicate it is a local product—perhaps an imitation of an import. Whatever the case, the pendant correlates the lion and a goddess of foreign origin (see further §5.4.1).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 215.

¹⁴² See, e.g., Urs Winter, *Frau und Göttin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt* (OBO 53; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1983), Abb. 503 for a neo-Assyrian (8th/7th century) example from Sam'al (Zinjirli).

¹⁴³ Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole: Neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen* (4th ed.; QD 134; Freiburg: Herder, 1998), 541 identify the goddess as Ishtar of Arbela.

¹⁴⁴ See Tallay Ornan, "Ištar as Depicted on Finds from Israel," in *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* (ed. Amihai Mazar with Ginny Mathias; JSOTSup 331; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 235–56. Further mention must be made of some pieces from the later IA II period, even though they contain images of composite beings. One is the fascinating seal of y-[]hw [š-]lm (CWSSS #173) that depicts an *aladlammū* ("lamassu") (**fig. 3.85**). This seal combines a number of foreign (including Assyrian, Urarturian, and Phoenician) elements of glyptic art (see Tallay Ornan, "The Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals: A Preference for the Depiction of Mortals," in Sass and Uehlinger, *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals*, 60 n. 11; Benjamin Sass, "The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals: Iconism vs. Aniconism," in Sass and Uehlinger, *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals*, 236; Christoph Uehlinger, "Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals," 261; Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 340). It is probably an import. Still, it may indicate a merging of an Assyrian Ishtar component with a Judahite Asherah component (*ibid.*).

More important are the many Egyptian amulets frequently found in graves in IA II (*ibid.*, 350). Many of these depict the lion-headed Sekhmet (*ibid.*, illus. 338a from Lachish and illus. 338b from Achziv). See further Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, 146–96 (#66–148) for a catalogue of 83 amulets of either Sekhmet or Bastet found in places such as Megiddo, Beth-Shean, Tell el-Farḥah (N.), Tell en-Naḥbeh, Gezer, Beth-Shemesh, Jerusalem, Lachish, Tell el-Farḥah (S.), Tell el-ḥAjjul, Tell es-Safi, Serāḥ, Achziv, Tell

Connections with male deities in IA II are no more obvious than those with female deities. There may be a relationship between the rise of what Keel and Uehlinger call “the guardian lion” type and the deity, especially Yahweh, but this is not certain since guardian lions may just as easily “represent or embody the pharaoh,” or may simply be “aggressive guard animals.”¹⁴⁵ What is certain, is that there are a number of such depictions of the lion in IA II. As Keel and Uehlinger state: “Their importance can be seen in the fact that they appear on so many different media and are found in both Judah and Israel”;¹⁴⁶ indeed, the “increase in importance [of] the northern Syrian guard-lion symbolism” is one of the “hallmarks of Iron Age IIB.”¹⁴⁷

It is also certain that such images play a largely protective function. The crudely carved lions found in a ninth-century grave at Tel Eitun (**fig. 3.87**) illustrate this nicely.¹⁴⁸ In contrast to the typical orientation of lion-orthostats, however, these lions face *into* the grave. “Their function was [therefore] not to secure the grave and the repose of the deceased, but to keep the spirits of the dead away from the living.”¹⁴⁹

Also belonging to the apotropaic realm is the assortment of IA II lion amulets found in places like Beth-Shemesh (**fig. 3.88**), Tell el-Farḥah (S.) (**fig. 3.89**), Lachish (**fig. 3.90**), and Samaria (**fig. 3.91**).¹⁵⁰ It is even possible that some of the Samaria ivories served protective functions. This is especially true for the reclining lions (**fig. 3.92**), which show evidence of being “moveable pieces that could be used on furniture, such as a throne or a bed.”¹⁵¹ Schroer has pointed to an image of Ashurbanipal’s bed that attests to just such a situation and function.¹⁵²

Abu Hawam, Tel Gerisa, Ashkelon, and Sheikh Zuweid. These date from LB II through the Hellenistic periods, but most are from IA II. The unprovenanced Hebrew seal of *ḥzḥ brn ʿls* (**fig. 3.86**) might also be mentioned here as it contains a picture of Sekhmet or Bastet. On the basis of such pieces, Keel/Uehlinger comment: “[t]his raises the question of whether the popularity of these deities might not also be due to the fact that a point of contact is provided that links the lion and the goddess once again, as had been done long ago” (*Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 350).

¹⁴⁵ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 188.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 278.

¹⁴⁸ See David Ussishkin, “Tombs from the Israelite Period at Tel Eitun,” *Tel Aviv* 1 (1974): 109–27.

¹⁴⁹ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 188; so also Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 78.

¹⁵⁰ The latter depicts a striding lioness and is unique (Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, 547: “sehr ungewohnt”). Herrmann dates it to IA IIB, even though it was found in the Roman Area Qb. Note also the IA lion- and lioness-(!) shaped scarabs discussed by Keel (*Corpus: Einleitung*, 71–72), already mentioned above, some of which date to IA II.

¹⁵¹ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 188; ANEP 264.

¹⁵² Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 348 and 548 Abb. 134.

Most of the Samaria ivories were found in the royal acropolis there,¹⁵³ and probably date to the 9th or 8th century, perhaps from the time of King Ahab, though the multiple destructions of the site have caused problems with the stratigraphy.¹⁵⁴ The pieces that did not adorn furniture may have been used as wall friezes.¹⁵⁵ Whatever the case, the style betrays marked Phoenician influence.¹⁵⁶

Another fascinating piece from Samaria that connects the lion with the figure of the king—this time the *Assyrian* king—is the bulla that was found there with the Assyrian royal seal impression on it (**fig. 3.93**). This seal is probably an import (or perhaps a local imitation of one) as this depiction was the standardized representation of the Assyrian royal house itself (see **fig. 4.109**).¹⁵⁷ Later, in the Persian Period, the motif of the king stabbing a lion becomes quite popular (see below) so that the Samaria piece (or others like it) may have become a model for subsequent, local exemplars. “The bulla from Samaria must be an impression either from a ‘royal’ stamp that was used to seal documents sent *to* the governor of the province or a stamp that belonged solely to the Samaritan governor himself.”¹⁵⁸ Hence, the lion in this depiction is probably “symbolizing all the peoples and forces that might possibly threaten this newly established political cosmos.”¹⁵⁹

An example of the use of the lion on an indigenous royal seal was found at Ramat Ra^oel (**fig. 3.94**). It comes from the handle of a *lmlk* jar. Sass has argued that this seal, probably stemming from the late-eighth century and

¹⁵³ Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000–586 B.C.E.* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1990), 503; Kathleen Kenyon, *Royal Cities of the Old Testament* (New York: Schocken, 1973), 89; Nahman Avigad, “Samaria (City),” *NEAEHL* 4:1302.

¹⁵⁴ Mazar, *Archaeology*, 505; Kenyon, *Royal Cities*, 83; cf. Avigad, “Samaria (City),” 4:1302, 1304.

¹⁵⁵ Kenyon, *Royal Cities*, 85, 89; Avigad, “Samaria (City),” 4:1306.

¹⁵⁶ See, e.g., Kenyon, *Royal Cities*, 85, 87–88; Avigad, “Samaria (City),” 4:1303, 1306; Gabriel Barkay, “The Iron Age II–III,” in Ben-Tor, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, 322.

¹⁵⁷ See E. Stern, “Notes on the Development of Stamp-Glyptic Art in Palestine during the Assyrian and Persian Periods,” in *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in Memory of H. Neil Richardson* (ed. Lewis M. Hopfe; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 143. See the studies of A. J. Sachs, “The Late Assyrian Royal-Seal Type,” *Iraq* 15 (1953): 167–70; and Suzanne Herbordt, *Neuassyrische Glyptik des 8.–7. Jh. v. Chr.* (SAAS 1; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1992). See also A. R. Millard, “An Israelite Royal Seal?,” *BASOR* 208 (1972): 5–9, especially 7. On the Assyrian royal seal, see further Chapter 4 (§4.3.1.1).

¹⁵⁸ Stern, “Notes,” 143 (emphasis his).

¹⁵⁹ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 284. A similar function might be ascribed to a lion-shaped stamp seal from Achziv (see Baruch Brandl in Keel, *Corpus I*, Achsib Nr. 115) where a human figure holding two crocodiles is approached by two striding (hunting) lions, one over the other (see above). I thus disagree with Brandl that the two are “independent scenes” (*ibid.*, 60).

depicting a lion pouncing on an ibex, is probably “an official Judahite seal.”¹⁶⁰ If so, this raises the question of whether other seal depictions with the lion, either alone or in combination with other motifs, are representative of the king or other officials/royalty. One notes, for instance, the seal impression on a store handle from Hazor Stratum VA (**fig. 3.95**). Yadin opined that the presentation of the lion on this seal, especially the raised tail, “somewhat resembles the lion on the seal of שמע עבד ירבעם from Megiddo.”¹⁶¹ This leads directly to a discussion of this famous seal, but first it should be stressed that, as Yadin’s comments already intimate, the seal of Shema is not unique in its depiction. Indeed, a large number of unprovenanced seals bear a marked similarity to this seal (see §3.6 further below), and, accordingly, are probably to be dated similarly.

Of course, the dating of the famous seal of *šmḥ ʿbd yrḇʿm* (**fig. 3.96**),¹⁶² perhaps “the most majestic of all Hebrew seals”¹⁶³ and certainly among the most famous finds in Israel, is both difficult and debated. Originally found in the Megiddo excavations of 1904, the seal was subsequently lost¹⁶⁴ leaving only impressions that have been reduplicated a number of times—often revealing different details.¹⁶⁵

When the seal was originally discovered, it was assumed that its owner was a royal official of Jeroboam II (ca. 786–746).¹⁶⁶ This has been challenged,

¹⁶⁰ Sass, “The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals,” 222. Uehlinger, “Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals,” 284–85 n. 86 has expressed doubt “that ‘a high-ranking official of the royal administration’ [Barkay’s term]...would use a seal which could cause him to be considered illiterate” (as it is not inscribed).

¹⁶¹ Yadin et al., *Hazor II*, 60.

¹⁶² CWSSS #2 (pp. 49–50). Another image of the seal is found in Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder*, Abb. 578 on Pl. CCXXV.

¹⁶³ Sass, “The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals,” 221.

¹⁶⁴ See, most recently, Hershel Shanks, “Have You Seen This Seal?: Probably Not,” *BAR* 26, no. 1 (January/February 2000): 4.

¹⁶⁵ E.g., some pictures of the impression show what is perhaps an object or a flaw of some sort underneath the lion. Only an examination of the actual seal would be definitive. Note also Kurt Galling, “Beschriftete Bildsiegel des ersten Jahrtausends v. Chr. vornehmlich aus Syrien und Palästina: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der phönikischen Kunst,” *ZDPV* 64 (1941): 175 and *DOTT* 220–221, both of which make mention of an *ankh*-symbol behind the lion and a palm tree in front of the lion. Neither of these are apparent on pictures of the seal impression, because they were “lightly painted, not engraved. A suggestion has been made that they were drawn at the time of the drawing of the lion, but for some unknown reason their engraving was never executed. This theory is untenable because the colour would doubtless have disappeared with the use of the seal. It is more likely that these symbols were added by a later owner of the signet, which may then have been used as an amulet” (*DOTT* 220–21).

¹⁶⁶ This was challenged early by C. Clermont-Ganneau (see his “Le sceau de Chemaḥ, serviteur de Jéroboam,” *Recueil d’archéologie orientale* 6 [1905]: 294–98), though with little success. Cf. Klaas A. D. Smelik, *Writings from Ancient Israel: A Handbook of Historical and Religious Documents* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 144

however, by scholars such as S. Yeivin, G. Ahlström, and—most recently—D. Ussishkin.¹⁶⁷ These are agreed that the seal should be dated, not to the 8th century, but to the 10th century on the basis of the following considerations:

- 1) the *stratigraphical context* of the find, which Ussishkin has evaluated afresh and related to Gate 1567, which “formed the main entrance to the compound of Palace 1723, part of Stratum VA–IVB, whose construction is generally assigned to the reign of Solomon”;¹⁶⁸
- 2) the *paleography* of the script, which might also be prior to the 9th century;¹⁶⁹ and
- 3) the *iconography* of the seal, which some have tied to northern (late Hittite or Phoenician) artistic traditions.¹⁷⁰

If Ussishkin, Ahlström, and Yeivin are correct, the Jeroboam mentioned on the seal would be Jeroboam I (ca. 922–901). “Thus, the seal would be the first non-biblical reference to the existence of the state of Israel of the tenth century BC.”¹⁷¹ Others, however, continue to insist that the seal should be

who points out the high quality of the workmanship—yet another reason why Shema must have been a servant of the king.

¹⁶⁷ S. Yeivin, “The Date of the Seal ‘Belonging to Shemaʿ (the) Servant (of) Jeroboam’,” *JNES* 19 (1960): 205–12 = “The Date of the Seal of ‘Shemaʿ Servant of Jeroboam,’” *EI* 6 (1960): 47–52 (Hebrew), 28* (English summary); Gösta W. Ahlström, “The Seal of Shemaʿ,” *SJOT* 7 (1993): 208–15; David Ussishkin, “Gate 1567 at Megiddo and the Seal of Shema, Servant of Jeroboam,” in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (ed. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum, and Lawrence E. Stager; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 410–28.

¹⁶⁸ Ussishkin, “Gate 1567,” 419; cf. 422. Cf. Yeivin, “The Date,” 211; and Ahlström, “The Seal,” 213, who state that the seal belongs to Stratum IV.

¹⁶⁹ Yeivin, “The Date,” 209.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 209–10. Note especially Yeivin’s conclusion: “these details combine to suggest a certain relationship of this engraving with the contemporary school of art lately known as *altspäthethitisch*, and assigned to the eleventh–tenth centuries B.C.E. with a possible extension into the early ninth century at the latest....The engraving of the seal...has been executed by a craftsman belonging to such a school” (209–10). However, Yeivin is forced to admit of some differences between the seal and this “school.” He is also incorrect in stating that the presentation of the lion in profile but chest viewed frontally is unparalleled in the 8th century (209), as the same presentation is now found on the seal of *nry* (fig. 3.149; *CWSSS* #1156; see Nahman Avigad, “A New Seal Depicting a Lion,” *Michmanim* 6 [1992]: 33*–36*, and further below). Similarly, the patch on the chest is not a “bald” spot (Yeivin, “The Date,” 209) but a part of the depiction of the thigh (Avigad, “A New Seal,” 33*). Ahlström, “The Seal,” 215, argues that the engraver was probably a Phoenician artisan or was at least taught by such a person or by such traditions.

¹⁷¹ Ahlström, “The Seal,” 215. Cf. Yeivin, “The Date,” 211; Ussishkin, “Gate 1567,” 424.

dated to the 8th century and thus to Jeroboam II.¹⁷² The stratigraphy is, at best, “ambiguous,”¹⁷³ and the paleographical evidence is also not conclusive.¹⁷⁴ Iconographically speaking, “all [of] the inscribed seals with similar lions are assigned to the eighth century” and Avigad/Sass have noted the lack of tenth-century glyptic parallels, and, more generally, the lack of tenth-century West Semitic inscribed seals.¹⁷⁵ Still, the circularity of such an argument should be noted and caution is thus warranted.¹⁷⁶ Regardless of the precise date, the seal of Shema belongs to IA II, whether to the early or middle part of the period. It is also significant that the seal evidently belonged to a royal official, perhaps even “the provincial governor of Megiddo,”¹⁷⁷ especially as it was found in the administrative quarter.¹⁷⁸

If correct, this seal is another instance where the lion might be functioning as a symbol of the king, of royalty, or of the royal power. A further example of the same may be the lion that was found crudely scratched onto one of the steps on a staircase to the governor’s palace in eighth-century Lachish (**fig. 3.97**). But even in less specifically royal contexts, Keel and Uehlinger argue that the seal amulets that have the striding lion as their chief decorative element have royal associations and that this depiction is derived from Egypt.¹⁷⁹ Examples have been found in Lachish with the lion striding over a prone human figure (**fig. 3.98**), or over the *nb* sign (**fig. 3.99**).¹⁸⁰ Even lions that do not stride over a figure or over a sign of authority may be taken as royal. Note, for example, the seal from Megiddo (**fig. 3.100**), where the lion has a uraeus-shaped tail.¹⁸¹ In this light, royal associations may also be operative for the roaring lions on

¹⁷² Cf. *CWSSS* 49; Graham I. Davies, *Megiddo* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1986), 102–103; Smelik, *Writings from Ancient Israel*, 144; Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder*, 164; Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 190; *DOTT* 221; *ANEP* 280.

¹⁷³ *CWSSS* 50, Ussishkin, “Gate 1567,” 421; Ahlström, “The Seal”; cf. also the uncertainty of Herbert Gordon May, *Material Remains of the Megiddo Cult* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1935), 2 n. 4.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Larry G. Herr, *The Scripts of Ancient Northwest Semitic Seals* (HSM 18; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 82.

¹⁷⁵ *CWSSS* 50.

¹⁷⁶ I.e., if the seal of Shema is actually dateable to the 10th century on stratigraphic grounds, it may indicate that some of the unprovenanced seals that are characteristically dated to the 8th century in comparison to this seal might be pushed earlier. The corpus of lion seals, furthermore, may not be from the same horizon. Cf. Sass, “The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals,” 221 on the circularity of assigning all of these seals to the same nationality (Aramaic).

¹⁷⁷ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 190.

¹⁷⁸ See Ussishkin, “Gate 1567,” 422; Ahlström, “The Seal,” 211.

¹⁷⁹ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 269.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 269 and n. 155 mention the same motif on a seal impression from Jericho and on an unpublished seal in a private collection.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 269 n. 156 mention two more seals from private collections with the same motif. It is frequent in late-MB seals from Tell el-ʿAjjul (see above) as well as two LB examples (Keel, *Corpus I*, Tell el-ʿAğul, Nrn. 807, 846; cf. also Nr. 304).

artifacts from Judah—for example, the eighth- or seventh-century terra-cotta lion found near Hebron (**fig. 3.101**). A more certain example is the late IA seal impression on a sherd found in a mixed late IA/Persian Period context at Tel Dan (**fig. 3.102**). Despite the mixed context, it was found above a destruction layer probably dating to the 8th century, so the piece must be later than that.¹⁸² Indeed, the piece bears marked similarity to two Neo-Assyrian seals (probably from seventh-century Nineveh) that may have been royal administrative seals used to seal booty (**figs. 4.57–58**).¹⁸³ These parallels, in turn, may shed light on both the date and function of the Tel Dan impression.

To be sure, even the more symbolic uses of the lion evoke its power, which is also portrayed *naturalistically* on a number of representations. One of the Samaria ivories contains a quite realistic depiction of a lion biting the neck of a bull (**fig. 3.103**).¹⁸⁴ In an eighth-century seal from Megiddo, a lion attacks a caprid from behind, while a vulture attacks a rabbit (**fig. 3.104**), nicely evoking the connection of the predator and the carrion-eater that is familiar both in the wild and in various biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts.

Finally, a number of lion artifacts have been found that were apparently used as *cult objects* or *associated with the cult* in IA II. A small bronze figurine of a lion couchant was found near the altar in ninth-century Arad (**fig. 3.105**). Its exact function is unknown though it recalls the bronze lions used as weights in ancient Israel/Palestine and Mesopotamia. A beautiful lion bowl was found in Stratum I (last third of the 8th century) at Tell el-ʿOreimeh (Tel Kinrot/Kinneret) (**fig. 3.106**).¹⁸⁵ As the lion has no mane, it is probably female.¹⁸⁶ The modeling is excellent and the substance of which it is made, Egyptian Blue, makes the piece quite rare.¹⁸⁷ Also unusual for lion bowls from ancient Israel/Palestine is that this particular instance does not seem to reflect the lion-style of the “Middle to Late Hittite stylistic phase of Northern Syria.” Instead, “it shows clear Assyrian influence in its attempt to give a natural

¹⁸² See Avraham Biran, David Ilan, and Raphael Greenberg, *Dan I: A Chronicle of the Excavations, the Pottery Neolithic, the Early Bronze Age and the Middle Bronze Age Tombs* (Jerusalem: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1996), 47–48.

¹⁸³ See Herbordt, *Neuassyrische Glyptic*, Taf. 19 ##1, 2, 5, 6; Dominique Collon, *Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum* (ed. J. E. Curtis and J. E. Reade; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 189 and figs. 195–97; and the discussion in Chapter 4 (§4.2.2).

¹⁸⁴ *ANEP* 264–265 mentions that the same motif is found on an ivory comb at Megiddo.

¹⁸⁵ See Volkmar Fritz, “Kinneret: Excavations at Tell el-ʿOreimeh (Tel Kinrot) 1982–1985 Seasons,” *Tel Aviv* 20 (1993): 187–215, especially 208, fig. 11; and idem, “The Lion Bowl from Kinneret,” *BA* 50 (1987): 232–40.

¹⁸⁶ Fritz, “Kinneret,” 207.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 208. Only one other lion bowl, from Hasanlu in western Persia, is made of the same substance. For the latter piece, see M. N. van Loon, “A Lion Bowl from Hasanlu,” *Expedition* 4 (1962): 14–19; Fritz, “The Lion Bowl,” 233. Fritz has collated some 77 lion bowls (46 of which are from Çatal Hüyük) recovered from various excavations (many are unprovenanced) throughout the ancient Near East (see “The Lion Bowl,” 239 n. 2).

rendering of the lion” and thus imitates Assyrian style.¹⁸⁸ The combination of the lion with a human hand on the bottom of the bowl is also “rather rare.”¹⁸⁹ Whatever the details of the motif, its significance, and function, Fritz thinks it is unlikely, given the small size of the bowl, that it was used for libation or incense. In his opinion, it is more probable that the bowl was connected to a bag of some sort and that it was used for ointment.¹⁹⁰ The ointment could thus be poured out though the mouth of the lion into the bowl and also gathered back in.

Other cult objects include a molded lion-head from Tell Qasile (**fig. 3.107**), “apparently part of a brazier or incense burner.”¹⁹¹ A spoon, probably for an unguent of some sort, in the form of a lion’s jaw was found in ninth-century Tell Beit Mirsim (**fig. 3.108**).¹⁹² Such pieces attest to the significance of the lion image in cultic ritual, a point further underscored by the discovery of a lion foot-bone “recovered from the mid-ninth-century BCE deposit in the altar room complex in the sanctuary” at Tel Dan.¹⁹³ The cut marks on the bone are “consistent with skinning.”¹⁹⁴

In conclusion, it is uncertain if the lions of IA II depictions, especially when alone and striding and roaring, represent the king or the deity or simply the lion’s naturalistic power and strength appropriated apotropaically. Still, Keel and Uehlinger argue that

it appears that the roaring lions of Iron Age IIB—holding their tails high above their heads in contrast to the more peaceful *qudshu* lions—have no connection with a goddess but are used instead as a way to depict a sphere of power that is dominated by males.¹⁹⁵

Even so, elsewhere they state that the guardian-function of the lion in IA II “cannot be linked with any known deity.”¹⁹⁶ Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the guardian-function cannot be linked with *only one* known deity. Indeed, the tradition of using the lion in connection with various and sundry

¹⁸⁸ Fritz, “Kinneret,” 209; idem, “The Lion Bowl,” 236, 239.

¹⁸⁹ Fritz, “The Lion Bowl,” 235. Only five other examples (from Hasanlu and Samos) contain the same combination.

¹⁹⁰ See *ibid.*, 235–38 for a discussion.

¹⁹¹ B. Maisler, *The Excavations at Tell Qasile: Preliminary Report* (Jerusalem, 1951), 201–202 [reprinted from *IEJ* 1 (1950–1951)]. Maisler dates the piece to the 9th or 8th century (*ibid.*, 67). Note also the IA lion’s head from the Golan discussed by Claire Epstein, “An Iron Age Lion’s Head Found in the Golan,” *Qadmoniot* 3 (1970): 134–35 [Hebrew].

¹⁹² See above for stylistic connections to **fig. 3.82**.

¹⁹³ Cf. the IA remains of a lion found at Tell es-Saḥidiyeh; see L. Martin, “The Faunal Remains from Tell es-Saḥidiyeh,” *Levant* 20 (1988): 83–84. I am thankful to Andrew G. Vaughn for drawing my attention to this reference.

¹⁹⁴ Wapnish, “Lions,” 3:361.

¹⁹⁵ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 191. They note that no female PNs have been found on the inscribed lion seals—nor any clearly Yahwistic PNs—“but this might be by chance” (*ibid.*).

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

deities is long-standing (see Chapter 4 §4.4), though it is certainly not limited to just this or only that particular deity. Indeed, the use of the guard-lion in palaces throughout the Near East indicates that this apotropaic function was frequently used in non-cultic contexts as well (see §§4.5.2–4.5.3).

But if the lion *was* connected with a deity in IA II Israel, which deity would it have been? Keel and Uehlinger think that the apotropaic use of the lion in the Samaria ivories may indicate that Yahweh “was worshiped as such an apotropaic, protective deity in Samaria,” though the use of such lion images on furniture “should hardly be interpreted as a way to *venerate* a particular deity.”¹⁹⁷ Instead, such objects illustrate “that people thought of the lion as a creature that offered powerful protection.”¹⁹⁸ They write similarly of Judah during IA II:

As in the Northern Kingdom, Yahweh could also be depicted in Judah by means of the image of a roaring lion....But these images can hardly be interpreted as symbols or attribute animals of Yahweh. Instead, they are a way to express the respect that humans have for this powerful animal.¹⁹⁹

However, in my judgment, the possibility that the lion was connected with (male) deities²⁰⁰ and that the eighth-century prophets could compare Yahweh to a lion—in fact *call* Yahweh a lion²⁰¹—indicates that there is much more to the lion image in the late IA II period than simple human respect for a wild animal.

3.5. IRON AGE III/PERSIAN PERIOD (586–332)

The IA III/Persian Period witnesses an almost total absence of the lion image connected with deities. The absence *is* total when it comes to the goddess. The only gods associated with the lion are: 1) Bes, who is portrayed as “Lord of the Lions” on seals from Ḥatlit and Ashkelon (**figs. 3.109–110**, respectively);²⁰² 2) Baal (perhaps), who fights a lion on a scarab from Akko (**fig. 3.111**);²⁰³ and 3)

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 190 (emphasis theirs).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 191.

²⁰⁰ See Ornan, “The Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals,” especially 63: “The lion on which the god is standing may show in different light the West Semitic seals that have a lion as main motif or virtual scene...regarded usually as a symbol of royalty....The few depictions in West Semitic seals of a deity on a lion (and its more frequent occurrence elsewhere), may hint that when on its own, it could stand for a deity.”

²⁰¹ A point Keel and Uehlinger acknowledge (*Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 190).

²⁰² Note the combination of Egyptian and Asiatic iconography (Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 380). Note also the unprovenanced seal showing Bes between two lions (Galling, “Beschriftete Bildsiegel,” 152, 185 and no. 86).

²⁰³ Keel’s interpretation (*Corpus I*, 574) of this figure as Baal is dependent on IA II representations (see above). The headdress is Canaanite and suggestive of either Baal or Reshef (see Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 246–48). Keel’s identification of the lion-enemy as Mot in such depictions has been noted

the Greek hero/god Heracles. In the case of the latter—who appears on three seals from ḲAtlit fighting a lion (**figs. 3.112–114**), as well as on terra-cotta artifacts, such as the head with lion headdress from Lachish (**fig. 3.115**)—it is somewhat unclear if the imagery reflects a divinized Heracles or is more generally related to fascination with Heracles as (human) hero/mighty one. The fact that Heracles “was recognized and invoked as a god [in Greece] from at least late in the 6th cent[ury],” as well as his syncretistic connections with the Tyrian god Melqart, may argue for divine connections.²⁰⁴ Still, “it is impossible to say how the [owners of such pieces] interpreted the Greek Herakles imagery, that pleased them sufficiently to spend money for it.”²⁰⁵

The distinctive elements of Heracleian iconography—“the lion-skin cape and hood (flayed from the Nemean lion), his club, and his bow and arrows”²⁰⁶—are present on a number of pieces from IA III Israel/Palestine. This is especially true of the Wadi Daliyeh seal impressions, which depict Heracles at least three times.²⁰⁷ He is found wrestling the (Nemean) lion (**fig. 3.116**), dressed in the lion skin with club (**fig. 3.117**, a Hellenistic piece), and carrying the lion skin along with club and bow (**fig. 3.118**).²⁰⁸

Heracles’ battle with the Nemean lion may also be found on an incense altar/box²⁰⁹ from Gezer that depicts a figure in battle with a lion (**fig. 3.119**).²¹⁰ Notable in this image are the huge size of the lion,²¹¹ the shoulder ornament (see Excursus 2), the protruding tongue, and the club in the figure’s hand.

above. The parallels are such that the piece may belong to late IA II (cf. Keel, *Corpus I*, 574).

²⁰⁴ See Albert Schachter, “Heracles,” *OCD* 684–86; citation from 685. Also C. Bonnet, *Melqart: Cultes et mythes de l’Héraclès tyrien en Méditerranée* (Studia Phoenicia 8; Leuven: Peeters, 1988); Brent A. Strawn, “Melqart,” *EDB* 882. Contrast Mary Joan Winn Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I: The Wadi Daliyeh Seal Impressions* (DJD 24; Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 26.

²⁰⁵ Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, 85–86 (cf. 31), of the Samaria finds. See below.

²⁰⁶ Schachter, “Heracles,” 685.

²⁰⁷ See Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*. Note also a seal from ḲAtlit depicting Heracles with the rear legs of a lion skin, inscribed with a Phoenician PN in Ephraim Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538–332 B.C.* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982), 200 and fig. 325.

²⁰⁸ See the discussions in Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, 87–89, 90–91, and 92–94. She thinks Wadi Daliyeh 11C, 39, 42, and 47 may also depict Heracles (*ibid.*, 30).

²⁰⁹ One of these items, from Lachish, includes the word *lbnt*, which has been taken to mean “incense altar” (see, e.g., Stern, *Material Culture*, 187), but this is disputed. See Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 380 and n. 4. They prefer “incense boxes.”

²¹⁰ So Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 382, who interpret it “as a local portrayal of Heracles.” The dating of this piece varies widely. The IA III/Persian Period dating here follows Keel and Uehlinger.

²¹¹ On the size of the Nemean lion, see the synthesis of Apollodorus ii. 5.1, Valerius Flaccus i. 34, and Diodorus Siculus 4.11 in Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths: 2* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 103.

Leith has noted that, contrary to many depictions of Heracles throughout the Mediterranean basin, he is not depicted in the smiting posture among the Wadi Daliyeh seal impressions. As the smiting posture had a long association with the storm god, Leith thinks “[i]t is possible that in the Daliyeh bullae some evidence may be detected of self-selection at work against images which could have been understood in Samaria as portraying YHWH’s ancient rival.”²¹² While this is possible, even more likely, in my judgment, is Leith’s later comment that connects the figuring of Heracles with the “Lord of Animals” motif:

Perhaps the design was perceived in the western Persian Empire as a variation on the stereotypical Achaemenid scene of the ‘Persian Hero’ battling a lion or monster, of which there are several examples among the Wadi Daliyeh bullae.²¹³

In this view, the presentations of Heracles have more to do with the king, hero, or mighty one than with a god *per se*. Indeed, there are a number of scenes of “Heroic Encounter” or “Heroic Combat” found on IA III seals.²¹⁴

In depictions of *heroic encounter*, the Persian royal hero (identified by his crown and costume)²¹⁵ is portrayed as the “Lord of the Animals,” often between fantastic creatures—as in pieces from Gezer or Tell el-ʿEir.²¹⁶ However, he also battles the lion, undoubtedly a symbolic creature as well, but naturally portrayed. Such is the case on seals from Samaria (**fig. 3.120**)²¹⁷ and Jericho (**fig. 3.121**), as well as several more from Wadi Daliyeh (**figs. 3.122–124**).²¹⁸

The hero generally holds the lions by either their hind leg or by their head. Seals of this type were evidently mass-produced in IA III and have turned up in various digs.²¹⁹ “As an emblem of imperial power, the image played a potent

²¹² Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, 85; cf. 26.

²¹³ Ibid., 94. Note Wadi Daliyeh 47 (**fig. 3.125** below), which Leith speculates may represent Heracles (ibid., 30, 92 n. 2; cf. 85 and n. 1).

²¹⁴ The terminology follows Christoph Uehlinger, “‘Powerful Persianisms’ in Glyptic Iconography of Persian Period Palestine,” in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C. A. Korpel; OTS 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 134–82. In addition to the pieces discussed below, note also Galling, “Beschriftete Bildsiegel,” 164, 196 and no. 162.

²¹⁵ Hence: “The ‘Master of lions’ on these seals is almost certainly the Persian king” (Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 152).

²¹⁶ See Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 144 no. 1 = Stern, “Notes,” 139 fig. 2.

²¹⁷ Uehlinger notes the fact that the hero here does not look *exactly* like the Persian royal image may indicate that its fashioners “consciously denied Persian royalty to take over the quasi-divine position that was traditionally held by the ‘Syro-Mesopotamian’ hero or deity” (“Powerful Persianisms,” 150). For an example of this latter figure from Persian Period Ashkelon, see Keel, *Corpus I*, Ashkelon Nr. 59.

²¹⁸ Cf. the unprovenanced seal of *pnn* (CWSSS #1097), classified by Avigad/Sass as Phoenician or Aramaic or Ammonite.

²¹⁹ Stern, “Notes,” 140.

role in Persian propaganda”²²⁰—especially as many of these images were produced by cylinder seals (rare in Palestine in this period)—and thus were probably brought west by Persian officials and given to loyal locals.²²¹ But there may also be a connection between this type of seal and Heracles if Leith is correct in her judgment that Wadi Daliyeh 47 (**fig. 3.125**) portrays a nude Heracles encountering two lions.²²² Whatever the case, none of these seals seems to have come from a local, Samaria workshop.²²³

Scenes of *heroic combat* show the royal hero stabbing a lion and, “from the standpoint of distribution and popularity, [it] is the best known of all.”²²⁴ This depiction is certainly derived from the Neo-Assyrian royal seal impression—perhaps even from the example of such a seal found at Samaria (**fig. 3.93**), which might have become a model for local exemplars.²²⁵ “This motif was used by Persian officials in Palestine and is found on a number of bullae; four from Samaria—two from Samaria itself and two from the cave at Wadi ed-Daliyeh,”²²⁶ but such seals generally depict the king combating a winged monster. The lion as the enemy of the king is more frequent on coinage of the Persian Period. A large number of these coins are apparently Sidonian in origin, but a number of them that depict the Persian king stabbing a lion have been found at many of the major coastal sites of Palestine, including Akko, Tell Abu Hawam, Dor, and Jaffa.²²⁷ Sidon was thus not the only city to borrow this motif for its coinage: “Some Palestinian coins with the motif have recently turned up as well. The most interesting of these add the name of the city of Samaria.”²²⁸

Also evidencing a connection between the king or royal figure and the lion are the fragments of a throne apparently found in the vicinity of Samaria (**fig. 3.126**).²²⁹ The pieces include two bronze lion paws and a bronze cylinder. All three objects belonged to one piece of furniture and “bear a striking

²²⁰ Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, 210.

²²¹ See Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 153, 174.

²²² Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, 162–64. She notes that the piece may be locally produced.

²²³ Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 151–52; *contra* Leith.

²²⁴ Stern, “Notes,” 141.

²²⁵ See above; cf. Stern, “Notes,” 143–44.

²²⁶ Stern, “Notes,” 144.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, citing C. Lambert, “Egypto-Arabian, Phoenician and Other Coins of the Fourth Century B.C. Found in Palestine,” *QDAP* 2 (1932): 1–10.

²²⁸ Stern, “Notes,” 146, citing Y. Meshorer and S. Qedar, *The Coinage of Samaria in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (Jerusalem: Numismatic Fine Arts International, 1991), nos. 59–60. Cf. also Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, 210 and see further below.

²²⁹ See Miriam Tadmor, “Fragments of an Achaemenid Throne from Samaria,” *IEJ* 24 (1974): 37–43. For the use of lion parts—especially paws and legs—on thrones, see Martin Metzger, *Königsthron und Gottesthron: Thronformen und Throndarstellungen in Ägypten und im Vorderen Orient im dritten und zweiten Jahrtausend vor Christus und deren Bedeutung für das Verständnis von Aussagen über den Thron im Alten Testament* (2 vols.; AOAT 15/1–2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), especially 1:10–13, 44–45, 68–82, 246–51, 253; 2:8–13, 62–73, 146–47, 228–31, 234–35.

similarity to the corresponding elements in numerous representations of Achaemenid thrones in Persepolis [cf. **fig. 4.168**]. This leaves no doubt that they, too, belonged to a throne of the Persian period.”²³⁰ Tadmor speculates that this throne may have belonged to the governor of Samaria, as it was the capital of the Persian province and administrative seat.²³¹ The piece may even have been produced there.²³²

Another group of objects that may connect the lion with the king or royal figure are the seals found at Gibeon (**fig. 3.127**) and Ramat Ra^{el} (**fig. 3.128**) that depict a rampant lion.²³³ The lion on these seals stands upright on the hind legs with the forelegs outstretched to either side. Also on these seals is an object that Stern has identified as a “schematic depiction of the Achaemenid ‘fire-altar.’”²³⁴ Earlier, Stern was of the opinion that this type of depiction was “but a part of a scene appearing on Achaemenid seals...found in the Persian imperial archives”—namely, the presentation of the Persian king hunting the lion with bow and arrow.²³⁵ Stern went on to argue that the Judean examples took “only one part of the Achaemenid glyptic motif. But for the complete scene in the Achaemenid impressions, it would be difficult to understand the representation on the Judean seal-impressions.”²³⁶ The position of the lion was thus understood by him as portraying the lion’s agony, its open mouth “intended to express a final roar of anguish.”²³⁷

This interpretation can now be safely discounted.²³⁸ The rampant lion seals from Judah do not show the lion with arrows, and this is enough to argue that one should not assume that the imagery is “chopped” or somehow “extracted” from a fuller context. Also the rampant position of the lion has a long tradition in glyptic, not to signify a lion’s agony or death throes, but to show the lion *attacking*.²³⁹

Stern has now modified his position. He currently believes that the rampant lion seals ought to be connected, not with the “Assyro-Persian motif” of the king shooting the lion with bow and arrows, but with the type of seal that depicts the hero struggling with two monsters or lions.²⁴⁰ This may be seen as an advance on his earlier perspective. Yet even here nuance is necessary. The

²³⁰ Tadmor, “Fragments of an Achaemenid Throne,” 37.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

²³² *Ibid.*, 42–43; Stern, *Material Culture*, 143 opts for a Phoenician workshop.

²³³ See Ephraim Stern, “Seal-Impressions in the Achaemenid Style in the Province of Judah,” *BASOR* 202 (1971): 6–16; *idem*, “Achaemenid Lion-Stamps from the Satrapy of Judah,” *EI* 10 (1971): 268–73 (Hebrew), xix (English summary).

²³⁴ Stern, “Seal-Impressions,” 12; see also 10, 13.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 10; cf. 11–12, figs. 9–10 for examples from Persepolis and Ur.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11; cf. *idem*, *Material Culture*, 212.

²³⁷ Stern, “Seal-Impressions,” 11; cf. *idem*, *Material Culture*, 212.

²³⁸ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 387 argue similarly.

²³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 387.

²⁴⁰ Stern, “Notes,” 138; cf. already Frank Moore Cross’s editorial comment in Stern, “Seal-Impressions,” 11 n. 22a.

lions on seals of *heroic encounter* (see above) are not rampant; instead, they are typically inverted, being held by the royal hero by the tail or the hind leg. Seals of *heroic combat*, on the other hand, often do depict rampant animals. So, it is in this latter category that the Judean rampant lion seals must be placed. Still, these seals do not show a hero or royal figure and this is a rather large difference. One might posit that in these particular seals, then, the rampant lion has assumed self-standing significance, becoming an icon or entity of threat in and of itself. At the same time, given the history of the imagery, that icon could also evoke the memory of the lion's combatant. That evocation could affect the lion image in one of two ways: 1) negatively, insofar as the lion is an antagonist in scenes of heroic combat; or 2) positively, insofar as the anthropomorphic figure is missing, perhaps having appropriated, and now being represented by, the lion.

The second, positive interpretation of the lion on these seals seems more likely given the lack of a human figure. But, given that absence, it is difficult to say which referent such an aggressive, threatening, rampant lion might symbolize. Keel and Uehlinger along with Stern have hypothesized that it may be a symbol for Judah.²⁴¹ In the light of the presence of the fire altar, Keel and Uehlinger go so far as to say that it is even possible that the lion might represent Yahweh “symbolically ‘roaring from Zion.’”²⁴²

This leads to a discussion of a large number (over sixty) of anepigraphic seals that contain as their only decorative element a standing or striding lion, schematically portrayed, typically shown with upturned tail and sometimes with open, roaring mouth. Such seals have been found at a number of sites, including Jerusalem, Tell en-Na^ḥbeh, Gibeon, Mozah, Ramat Ra^ḥel (**figs. 3.129–130**), Jericho, Shechem, and Ein-Gedi (**fig. 3.131**). Keel and Uehlinger think these lion seals may be “a kind of later version of the roaring lion that appeared on the seals of Israelite officials during Iron Age IIB.”²⁴³ If so, this would lend further support to Stern's thesis that these seals—locally produced and of inferior quality when compared with Persian examples—were instruments used by officials involved in the administration of the Judean province.²⁴⁴

It is intriguing to note that the use of these seals, prevalent in the early part of IA III, declines later in IA III which witnesses the rise of the *yhwd* seals with their aniconic, completely epigraphic (and logocentric) presentations. Stern has observed in passing that this might indicate a reform (Nehemiah's?)

²⁴¹ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 387; Stern, *Material Culture*, 202–206.

²⁴² Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 387.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 386.

²⁴⁴ Stern, *Material Culture*, 209–13; *idem*, “Seal-Impressions,” 14 (on 15 he contrasts Judah with Samaria which “apparently used imported seals, not local imitations as in Judah”); *idem*, “Achaemenid Lion-Stamps,” xix. So also Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 386.

in the early 4th century, which replaced the animal images with nothing but the GN *yhwd*.²⁴⁵ This is speculative, but, if correct, one could further posit that the lion seals were replaced later because they were (or were thought to be) iconic representations of *deity*.²⁴⁶ This suggestion is tantalizing, and, if possible, one might well wonder how far back such a situation could obtain. Could, that is, the striding lions of IA II also symbolize Yahweh or another (male) deity?²⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the evidence necessary to draw certain conclusions on this point is lacking. Even so, a final seal type discussed by Stern may be applicable to the discussion.

Stern has argued that several seals from Ramat Ra^{el} (**figs. 3.132–133**) depicted “a bull with a solar orb between its horns.”²⁴⁸ Recently, however, Keel and Uehlinger have argued, especially on the basis of the tail positioning, that the animal is better understood as an attacking lion with open mouth.²⁴⁹ “The solar disk on the lion’s head makes it probable that the aggressive animal—and consequently perhaps also those shown in [**figs. 3.127–130**]—may represent a solar connotation of Yahweh of Zion.”²⁵⁰

Tangential support for the divine association(s) of the lion is provided by the continued use of the lion on various *cult objects* in IA III. A number of incense altars, similar to the Gezer example already discussed have been found; a few of these seem to contain lion images.²⁵¹ Stern traces the origins of these objects to Mesopotamia and specifically assigns their production to Phoenician workshops.²⁵²

A rhyton-fragment bearing the relief of a crouching lioness was found at Ein-Gedi and dated to the Persian Period by the excavators.²⁵³ Also from a vessel of some sort is the bronze, prancing lion cub found at Mi^{pe} Yamim (**fig. 3.134**). The unusual stance is probably the result of the fact that the piece was originally an accessory (probably a handle) of a larger vessel.²⁵⁴ This find,

²⁴⁵ Stern, “Seal-Impressions,” 14–15; idem, *Material Culture*, 213. But Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 139 n. 17 observes that the lion seals have been re-dated to the late Persian or early Hellenistic period by F. Bianchi, “I sigilli anepigrafi della Giudea achemenide: una nuova datazione,” *SEL* 13 (1996): 79–90.

²⁴⁶ Cf. above on Keel/Uehlinger’s opinion of the rampant lion with fire altar as possibly symbolic of Yahweh.

²⁴⁷ Cf. Ornan, “The Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals,” 63.

²⁴⁸ Stern, “Seal-Impressions,” 10; idem, *Material Culture*, 211.

²⁴⁹ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 389. One might also compare the presentation of the mouth on these seals with that of other lion seals.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 389.

²⁵¹ See Stern, *Material Culture*, 188 fig. 307 no. 4 and perhaps no. 15 (from Tell Jemmeh), as well as 193 fig. 311 no. 4 (from Megiddo). Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 389–90.

²⁵² Stern, *Material Culture*, 194.

²⁵³ See B. Mazar and I. Dunayevsky, “En-Gedi: Fourth and Fifth Seasons of Excavations: Preliminary Report,” *IEJ* 17 (1967): 133–43, especially 140. Note also the potsherd from locus 251 (building 234) discussed on 137.

²⁵⁴ See Rafael Frankel and Raphael Ventura, “The Mi^{pe} Yamim Bronzes,” *BASOR* 311 (1998): 39, 52.

along with three other bronze artifacts, may have been votive gifts to the temple located on the site in the Persian period. That this temple was later destroyed in the Hasmonean period may indicate that the temple was pagan.²⁵⁵ What is perhaps most interesting about this find is that the lion presented is a cub. The excavators compared the bronze to actual lion cubs (3–5 months in age) and have suggested “that this figurine was actually modeled on a live lion cub, probably at a local workshop, thus explaining its exceptional features.”²⁵⁶ Given the lion’s typical associations with power, threat, and/or protection, the “playful” bronze lion cub must have signified something different. This observation serves as a good segue into non-cult-related objects, but first one might also note as cult-related the large collection of IA III lion amulets catalogued by Herrmann.²⁵⁷

A number of objects from the IA III period depict the lion in what seems to be a primarily, if not exclusively, naturalistic manner. There is a gold ring from Gibeon (**fig. 3.135**) that depicts a lion attacking a deer (?).²⁵⁸ Stern notes a conical seal from Lachish that shows a lion trampling a ram.²⁵⁹ A scarab from Tell Abu Hawam shows two lions attacking a bull (**fig. 3.136**), while a scarab from Akko shows a lion attacking a caprid from behind (**fig. 3.137**). A scaraboid from Ashkelon shows a lion attacking the rear flank of a stag (**fig. 3.138**). Such depictions are not unlike what was seen in earlier periods and are also common throughout the ancient Near East (see, e.g., **figs. 4.14–15** and further Chapter 4 §4.2.1). However, the tendency to portray the lion naturalistically is taken to a new level in the Wadi Daliyeh seals. This is clear in a number of seals from there, perhaps most memorably in a seal showing a lion scratching its ear (**fig. 3.139**). Here the “mighty lion” is portrayed so naturalistically as to demystify it or, perhaps better, demythologize it. It is now “charming.”²⁶⁰ Leith has discussed the Greek style of this piece, as well as its probable origin in a workshop in, or artistic tradition of, Phoenicia or Cyprus.²⁶¹ Also Greek, Greco-Persian, or Greco-Phoenician is Wadi Daliyeh 37 (**fig. 3.140**).²⁶² Leith thinks that the seal was manufactured locally, probably “produced purposely for a Syro-Palestinian clientele with a history of lion seals.”²⁶³ The presentation of the lion in this seal is, nevertheless, quite different than that history (e.g., in IA II) and this is true even of the lion seals

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 54.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 52.

²⁵⁷ From Tell Keisan (Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, 540, #783), ḤAtlit (ibid., 541–43, #784–90; 545–46, #795–96; and 549–50, #802 [lion-head only]), Ashkelon (ibid., 545, #794), Tell es-Safi (ibid., 549, # 801 [head only]).

²⁵⁸ James B. Pritchard, *Gibeon: Where the Sun Stood Still* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 116 thinks it may have belonged to an official in the satrapy.

²⁵⁹ Stern, *Material Culture*, 199.

²⁶⁰ Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, 173.

²⁶¹ Ibid.; see also 174–75.

²⁶² Ibid., 176.

²⁶³ Ibid.

used in Judah in the same, though slightly earlier, period.²⁶⁴ Here is further evidence of the marked difference between Samaria and Yehud in the Persian Period.²⁶⁵

Similarly relaxed reposes are found on bullae from the Hecht collection, which may also be from Samaria.²⁶⁶ Two pieces are worthy of special note: the lion scratching his ear (**fig. 3.141**; cf. **fig. 3.139**) and the lion gnawing on the rear leg of an animal—perhaps a deer (**fig. 3.142**).²⁶⁷ It would seem, then, that Leith is correct in her assessment that lions were “particularly favoured by the Samaritans.”²⁶⁸

Finally, the coinage mentioned in passing above should be recalled as, “[d]uring the Persian period, coinage became the most important and most widely distributed medium for iconography in Palestine, relegating glyptic to the second rank for the first time since the 18th century BCE.”²⁶⁹ Samaria coinage is full of Persianisms, with the royal hero fighting the lion (e.g., **fig. 3.143**) or with the Persian king as “Master of Lions” (e.g., **fig. 3.144**).²⁷⁰ Here, too, then, Uehlinger’s assessment of the glyptic presentation of many of the seals holds true for the coinage of the period: “The one common notion which is emphatically stressed by a great proportion of seals and sealings [and now, also, coinage] is *the heroic character of Persian kingship*.”²⁷¹ Certainly the lion, whether as friend or foe, plays an important role in that heroic presentation.

3.6. UNPROVENANCED SEALS

Unfortunately, the large majority of seals and seal impressions—at least of the inscribed variety—that (probably) belong to the archaeological record of Israel/Palestine are unprovenanced, appearing in various museum and private collections. As these seals were not scientifically excavated, one cannot be

²⁶⁴ But one might note the scarabs from ḤAtlit (Keel, *Corpus I*, ḤAtlit Nr. 11) and Ashkelon (ibid., Ashkelon Nr. 60) that depict the familiar striding, roaring lion.

²⁶⁵ Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 173 notes that the Jericho seal (his 144 no. 4 = **fig. 3.121** here) is the only item from Persian Period Yehud to have this type of explicit Persianism. Hence, such Persianisms are limited, save for Samaria, where they are frequent (171, 174 and n. 106). Even here, however, the images stem from imported pieces (174).

²⁶⁶ See Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, 3.

²⁶⁷ It seems that Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. XXIII.9 may be parallel to WD 37; Pl. XXIII.10, in turn, looks similar to the striding/rampant roaring lion-type.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 177.

²⁶⁹ Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 175.

²⁷⁰ Uehlinger cites Yaḥakov Meshorer and Shraga Qedar, *Coinage of Samaria in the Fourth Century BCE* (New York: Numismatics Fine Arts International, 1991), nos. 16, 44–45, 48–51 and 59–60, respectively.

²⁷¹ Uehlinger, “Powerful Persianisms,” 175 (emphasis his). For more on the coins of the period, see Stern, *Material Culture*, 217–28, especially 221–22 and figs. 370–71. Cf. also Meshorer/Qedar, *Coinage of Samaria*, nos. 13–14, 22, 42, 54, 62.

certain that they are actually from Israel/Palestine. Nor, without the benefit of the stratigraphy from a controlled excavation, can one be certain of the date of such seals. Still, onomastic evidence, as well as paleographic, orthographic, and iconographic data can combine to help place these materials in their likely contexts. Even so, it should be remembered that one cannot rule out the possibility that some, perhaps even many, of the following seals are forgeries. Such is the case with unprovenanced materials.²⁷² Nevertheless, the importance of these items is such that it would be a great disservice to exclude them entirely from consideration. For obvious reasons, the discussion focuses on inscribed seals, and, more specifically, on those seals whose inscriptions seem to be Hebrew.²⁷³

There are at least twelve seals with inscriptions that are certainly, probably, or possibly Hebrew and that also have the lion as their primary image.²⁷⁴ These can be grouped into three categories depending on the composition: the lion as the only image; the lion encountering other creatures; and the lion depicted as victor over (pieces of) prey.

1. In the first category, the lion can be couchant, as in the seal of *lbd* (**fig. 3.145**), though the similar presentation of the lion in some seals from the second category (see below) may indicate that the lion here is leaping or preparing to leap. In any event, the more typical depiction on seals in this first category is that of the striding lion. Examples include the broken seal of *[b]šn* (**fig. 3.146**)²⁷⁵ and the seal of *ʿnn* (**fig. 3.147**).²⁷⁶

Two seals show the striding lion—still the dominant image—along with other motifs and hence serve to segue into the second category. The first is the seal of *nry* (**fig. 3.149**), which depicts a standing, roaring lion²⁷⁷ with a bird (falcon?) above it (though not resting on it) and the inscription below.²⁷⁸ Avigad thinks that the PN below the lion is “unusual” and was probably caused

²⁷² For the problems involved, see Andrew G. Vaughn, “Palaeographic Dating of Judaeans Seals and Its Significance for Biblical Research,” *BASOR* 313 (1999): 43–64.

²⁷³ This is certainly to err on the safe side, as there can be little doubt that seals bearing inscriptions in Phoenician, Aramaic, and so forth would also reflect on their owners *if they are actually from ancient Israel/Palestine*. However, if they are not from this area then it is possible that their languages (and imagery) indicate a different (and distant?) origin. Such is less likely to be the case with an unprovenanced *Hebrew* seal.

²⁷⁴ In addition to *CWSSS* and Sass and Uehlinger, ed., *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals*, see André Lemaire, “Trois sceaux inscrits inédits avec lion rugissant,” *Semitica* 39 (1990): 13–22.

²⁷⁵ To be dated to the 8th century, according to *CWSSS* 82.

²⁷⁶ Note that the *l* of the inscription is directly in front of the lion’s mouth. One might cf. the seal of *gdrn* (?) (**fig. 3.148**).

²⁷⁷ Not unlike the lion of the seal of *šm*; see Avigad, “A New Seal,” 35*.

²⁷⁸ This seal is quite similar to the seal of *rpty* (**fig. 4.178**; *CWSSS* #843), found in an eighth-century context at Khorsabad (*CWSSS* 315), which is considered to be Aramaic. See further below and Chapter 4 (§4.3.3.1).

by the lack of space: "The seal cutter did not take into account the need for an inscription that was to be added later."²⁷⁹

The second seal depicting the roaring lion image with another motif is that of *ḥšnll* (**fig. 3.150**).²⁸⁰ Here a roaring lion strides or stands slightly above a ground line, underneath of which is a two-winged beetle. Sass's judgment, that the relationship of lions on seals such as these to other motifs is "seldom self-evident,"²⁸¹ is no doubt applicable here, as well as to the seal of *nrȳ* and those in the categories below. Still, Keel and Uehlinger have pointed out that, given the beetle, there may be a connection in the seal of *ḥšnll* between the lion and sun symbolism.²⁸²

The lions in this first category are clearly portrayed as ferocious, terrifying creatures. The mouths are open in roar, frequently revealing fangs; in most cases they stride aggressively forward, though they may be portrayed as standing still in full roar or even lying down (or perhaps crouching for a leap?). The aggressive presentation of the first category is continued in the second.

2. Indeed, the seals of the second category compound the aggressive presentation of the lion as they depict it encountering other creatures. The seal of *ʿdqȳ* (**fig. 3.151**) shows a lion striding to the right in the third (from top) register; in front of the lion is an ibex. Though the seal is worn, it would appear that the legs of the ibex are on the register/ground line, while only one of the lion's rear legs would have touched the line. One rear leg and both front legs seem to end well above it, giving the lion the impression of rising or leaping up in pursuit and attack.

The seal of *šll* (**fig. 3.152**) is quite similar. Again, in the third (from top) register, a lion is depicted pursuing an ibex. The lion's mouth is open; the fangs are visible. The space for both the lion and the ibex is quite small, giving the impression that both animals are reclining and this is especially the case with the ibex, whose legs are tucked up underneath it. The lion's legs, although quite small, are extended, so the best interpretation is that the lion is leaping or running toward the ibex which is also to be understood as running in full stride (hence the front leg positioning).

The seal of *ḥšh* (**fig. 3.153**) continues the theme of the lion's hunt of, or encounter with, other creatures but with a different twist: here the lion on the seal encounters a sphinx. The depiction of the lion is quite similar to the seals already discussed. A noticeable difference is that the lion stands with its right forepaw upraised, extended toward the sphinx, as if in a clawing gesture,

²⁷⁹ Avigad, "A New Seal," 33*. Cf. 35* for the fact that seals were often engraved first and only inscribed upon purchase.

²⁸⁰ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 190 are incorrect in attributing this seal to Hazor Stratum VA.

²⁸¹ Sass, "The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals," 221.

²⁸² Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 190.

leaving little doubt that this encounter is not a friendly one. Above the lion is a two-winged beetle that is flanked by two *ankh* signs.

The seal of *l/l* (or perhaps “belonging to *l/l*”) (**fig. 3.154**) contains a similar scene that is made still more complex by the large number of motifs included in the seal. Here a lion with open mouth and protruding tongue strides left toward a griffin and over a snake (uraeus?) and a two-winged beetle. Behind the lion is another griffin and over the lion, perhaps alighting on it, is a bird.

The interpretation of these last two seals—especially the latter—is not a simple task. Help might be gleaned from seals belonging to the third category, which show the lion as victor, depicted over (pieces of) prey.

3. The seal of *l/h* (**fig. 3.155**) is an excellent example.²⁸³ It shows a roaring lion striding left on a ground line with open mouth and fangs bared. Directly in front of the lion and beneath its mouth is a dismembered bull’s head. The bull’s ear is almost between the lion’s teeth. A bird (perhaps a falcon), in perched position, is standing behind the lion well above the ground line.

The seal of *tnl/l* (**fig. 3.156**), while similar, is more complex. Again, the roaring lion faces left; directly in front of it and underneath its mouth is the dismembered head of an animal, perhaps an oryx. Underneath the lion is another small animal, perhaps another oryx. Behind the lion is an *ankh* sign and above the lion seems to be a scorpion or lizard of some sort. Avigad has argued that the plethora of items on this seal is the result of “the horror vacui (‘fear of vacancy’)”—the artist simply wanted to fill the vacant spaces around the lion.²⁸⁴ Hence, they are simple filling motifs. Indeed, there are so many of these filling motifs that the engraver was not able to include the owner’s full name, which should probably be *ntnl/l*.²⁸⁵ But even if these additional elements are fillers, it is significant that two are portrayed in positions of submission (underneath) or defeat (dismembered head) with regard to the lion, whose dominance and predatory prowess are thus underscored.

What is the significance and meaning of the lion on these various types of seals? What did the lion stand for? Could it have represented something other than the animal itself? Sass is uncertain about solitary lions (the first category): “It is not at all clear whether these solitary lions represent just their own natural, or apotropaic might as guardian lions, or whether they stand for the king, or a deity.”²⁸⁶ Sass’ caution is well taken, but the complex lion seals are certainly more transparent. That is, when the lion is portrayed over the dismembered head of an animal that constitutes part of its prey population, can there be any doubt that the scene is largely one highlighting the predatory

²⁸³ See André Lemaire, “Nouveau sceau nord-ouest sémitique avec un lion rugissant,” *Semitica* 29 (1979): 67–69.

²⁸⁴ Nahman Avigad, “Three Ancient Seals” *BA* 49 (1986): 51–53; citation from 52.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁸⁶ Sass, “The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals,” 222.

dominance of the lion? Sass has demurred a bit on the origin of such seals: “considering the near-total avoidance of bovine motifs in Hebrew glyptic” the seal of *tnbl* may not be Hebrew.²⁸⁷ However, is it merely coincidental that the dismembered heads in the seals of *tnbl* and *l/h* are bovine considering the long-standing tradition of the bull with the storm-god Baal and the high-god El?²⁸⁸ Or, as in the seal of *lsh*, can it be accidental that the lion claws at a sphinx wearing an Egyptian kilt or, as on the seal of *l/l* (or *l/l*), that the lion encounters winged griffins while striding over a snake (uraeus?) and winged beetle? To be sure, one must not over-interpret the imagery. However, in the light of these observations which indicate the dominance or antagonism of the lion over various entities, it seems at least possible that those seals that depict a single lion over an inscription (e.g., *nry*), or where part of the inscription is underneath the lion’s roaring mouth (e.g., *nn* and *gdrn* [?]), might also indicate the lion’s domination of the owner.²⁸⁹ If so, it may not be out of the question to posit that the lion in such presentations depicts or symbolizes the deity.²⁹⁰

There are a number of other inscribed and unprovenanced lion seals, many of which are thought to be Aramaic or probably Aramaic.²⁹¹ This has led Lemaire to think that the Hebrew lion seals are northern (Israelite) in origin.²⁹² But, as Sass has noted, “this may be a circular argument, probably arising from inadequate acquaintance with eighth-century Judahite iconography.”²⁹³ It is readily apparent from a number of the objects discussed in this chapter that northern influence was felt quite far south, and thus it seems unwise to quickly posit a northern provenance for all of the unprovenanced lion seals. It may be

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 221, cf. also 225. One must assume that Sass would also not consider the seal of *l/h* to be Hebrew on the basis of the same criterion.

²⁸⁸ For the El and the bull, see Patrick D. Miller, “El the Warrior,” in *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (JSOTSup 267; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 24–44; Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (VTSup 2; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955), 35–42.

²⁸⁹ The seal of *mnr* (fig. 3.157) may represent the final stage in such a development: the top of this seal depicts a recumbent lion that is almost completely sculptured in the round. The view is from the above so that when the seal is depressed or simply sitting on its base, the lion is on top of the seal—owning it, protecting it, keeping it. The perspective is quite similar to the (Phoenician) seal of *bdb/l* (fig. 4.45; *CWSSS* #726), though the detail of the latter is clearer and more complex, although the relief is lower. One might also compare the Urkish foundation deposits in the shape of lions (fig. 4.315).

²⁹⁰ Or, at least, for a powerful individual such as the king who dominates the seal-owner’s name. One might compare the lion on the vase of Sargon II (see J. E. Curtis and J. E. Reade, ed., *Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum* [New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995], 148 fig. 117). The lion’s roaring mouth faces an inscription: “The palace of Sargon, King of Assyria” (É.GAL ṾMAN.DU MAN KUR AŠ), as if the inscription is the content of the lion’s roar.

²⁹¹ Sass, “The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals,” 221; Lemaire, “Trois sceaux.”

²⁹² Lemaire, “Trois sceaux,” 16.

²⁹³ Sass, “The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals,” 221.

equally rash to assign all these seals to the 8th century, especially as they are, after all, unprovenanced in the first place. Of course, the similarities between many of these seals and the seal of *rpty* (fig. 4.178), which was found in an eighth-century context in Khorsabad, is of some significance, though the latter is probably Aramaic. Of equal significance, however, if not more, is the seal of *šmh*, which—as has been discussed above—has been re-dated to the late 10th century by several scholars. If that is correct, and if some of the unprovenanced seals stem from the same workshop or tradition, it would indicate that some of the latter are also earlier than the 8th century, though certainty is precluded. Finally, if such seals do depict, represent, or symbolize the deity, this would mean that it was not a total *novum* when an eighth-century prophet stood up and said “Yahweh roars from Mount Zion” (Amos 1:2; see Chapter 2 §2.3.4). Be that as it may, it is appropriate that this section should end with the cautions of Uehlinger:

Are...the...‘international’ roaring lions to be understood as attribute animals of definite deities, or do they simply denote super-human strength and vigour? This question was formulated fifty years ago by Galling...and it has still not found a clear-cut solution.”²⁹⁴

3.7. ONOMASTICA

Although not found in Israel/Palestine, their origin in the region warrants that the Amarna Letters be included in a discussion of onomastica relating to the lion. They are also significant insofar as they provide some of the earliest epigraphic data for the use of the lion in PNs in LB Israel/Palestine. There are two such PNs attested. The first, “Labaya,” spelled three different ways in its various attestations in a number of letters,²⁹⁵ is the PN of the ruler of Shechem. The name is West Semitic and means “Lion,” “Lion-like,” or “lion-man,”²⁹⁶ and is obviously based on *lbʾl*.²⁹⁷ Hess thinks that the “hypocoristic suffix suggests that *la-ab-a-ya* is best understood as a name shortened by the omission of the DN.”²⁹⁸

The second name, attested in EA 273 and 274, is NIN(*b_jle*)-UR.MAœ.MEŠ. The language in this name is less clear than in the case of

²⁹⁴ Uehlinger, “Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals,” 274, referring to Galling, “Beschriftete Bildsiegel,” 168.

²⁹⁵ See Richard S. Hess, *Amarna Personal Names* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), 102–103 for a full listing.


²⁹⁶ For the former, see *DOTT* 41; for the two latter options, see W. F. Albright in *ANET* 485 n. 5; and idem, “Two Little Understood Amarna Letters from the Middle Jordan Valley,” *BASOR* 89 (1943): 16 n. 51a, respectively.

²⁹⁷ Hess, *Amarna Personal Names*, 103; Albright, “Two Little Understood Amarna Letters,” 16 n. 51a.

²⁹⁸ Hess, *Amarna Personal Names*, 103. Cf. also William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 382: “[DN is] a lion.” This would eliminate Albright’s “lion-man” from consideration.

Labaya; possibilities include Akkadian and Anatolian as well as West Semitic.²⁹⁹ In the light of Labaya and the el-Khadr arrowheads (see below), a West Semitic relationship is at least possible. Whatever the exact language, the meaning of the name is “Lady of the Lions” or the like.³⁰⁰

The precise locale where this “Lady of the Lions” lived is debated (perhaps near Aijalon?),³⁰¹ but the specific location is largely unimportant to this investigation. Wherever it may have been, that is, both PNs reflect—in LB Palestine of the 14th century—the use of “lion” in PNs, and particularly in PNs that were apparently (once) theophoric.³⁰²

Stemming from IA I, are the five arrowheads found in el-Khadr, approximately 5 kilometers west of Bethlehem—the first of which was purchased on November 1, 1953.³⁰³ The features of these inscribed blades (**fig. 3.158**) are such that a transitional date is in order; they probably belong to the 12th or 11th century.³⁰⁴ Four of the five bear the same inscription:  *ḥbd/lbšt*

²⁹⁹ Hess, *Amarna Personal Names*, 175; Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 383: “probably W[est] S[emitic].”

³⁰⁰ Note Hess, *Amarna Personal Names*, 175: “The rendering of *belet*-UR.MA.ē.MEŠ is clear enough”; but contrast later: “The meaning of UR.MA.ē.MEŠ is not clear” (ibid.). So also Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 383: the “reading of [the] logograms [is] uncertain.” This uncertainty probably has to do with normalization and pronunciation (cf. Albright, “Two Little Understood Amarna Letters,” 15), with the primary options being *ḥlš* or *ḥlšti* (see Hess, *Amarna Personal Names*, 175). H. Bauer, “Die ‘Löwenherrin’ der Amarnabriefe Nrr. 273 und 274,” *ZDMG* 74 (1920): 210–11 argued for *kšphîrîm*, but this has generally been rejected. J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (2 vols.; Aalen: Otto Zeller, 1964), 1:839 n. e glosses “lady” (*Herrin*) with “Besitzerin.”

³⁰¹ Albright argued strongly for Zaphon in the middle Jordan valley (“Two Little Understood Amarna Letters,” 15–17; idem, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 122 n. 29). Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 319 n. 1 thoroughly refuted Albright’s reading. Note also the discussion in Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln*, 2:1328–29.

³⁰² Albright, “Two Little Understood Amarna Letters,” 15 n. 49: “It is probable that the name is taken from an appellation of the goddess Qudshu.” See also idem, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 196 n. 16 and idem, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 121–22.

³⁰³ See J. T. Milik and Frank M. Cross, Jr., “Inscribed Javelin-Heads from the Period of the Judges: A Recent Discovery in Palestine,” *BASOR* 134 (1954): 5, who discuss only three. In 1979, Cross came across two additional pieces. See Frank Moore Cross, “Newly Found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts,” *BASOR* 238 (1980): 1–20, especially 4–7. See also Joseph Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet: An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), 37–39. There are now some forty of these arrowheads (see P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., “Two Bronze Arrowheads with Archaic Alphabetic Inscriptions,” *EI* 26 (1999): 123*–28*, especially 126* n. 2 and the literature cited there), but to my knowledge only these five contain *lb(š)t*.

³⁰⁴ Milik and Cross, “Inscribed Javelin-Heads,” 5–6 and n. 2; Cross, “Newly Found Inscriptions,” 7; idem, “The Origin and Early Evolution of the Alphabet,” *EI* 6 (1967): 14*, 23*; idem, “The Evolution of the Proto-Canaanite Alphabet.”

(“arrow of *ḥbdlḥbt* [literally, ‘Servant-of-the-Lioness’]”).³⁰⁵ A fifth contains only *ḥbdlḥbt* on the obverse, but on the reverse adds *bnḥnt* (literally, “son of Anat”).³⁰⁶ The PN *ḥbdlḥbt* also appears in *KTU* 4.63 III 38, an administrative list of archers.³⁰⁷ This naturally raises questions of the relationship between these two sets of texts. Perhaps it is “pure coincidence”;³⁰⁸ but if not, it “may be an indication that a hereditary and/or mercenary archer class existed.”³⁰⁹ What person or deity, exactly, is signified by *ḥbt* is another complicated issue.³¹⁰ Milik and Cross raise three likely candidates: *ḤAḥirat*, *ḤAḥtart*, and *ḤAnat*.³¹¹ They summon evidence to support the leonine connections of all three goddesses, but seem to prefer *ḤAḥirat*. Cross apparently changed his mind later, opting for *ḤAnat* briefly,³¹² before settling on *ḤAḥerah*.³¹³ Most have followed suit,³¹⁴ though Dever has opted for *ḤAnat*.³¹⁵ Whatever the exact case, the goddess in question is “best identified with a war goddess.”³¹⁶

It is uncertain if these are local products as the language may be Phoenician.³¹⁷ Hence, the owner of this name and these arrowheads is in considerable doubt. He may belong to a particular type of Canaanite “Ben-

³⁰⁵ Milik and Cross, “Inscribed Javelin-Heads,” 6. But note that No. 2 lacks the *ḥ* (ibid.). No. 4 is missing the second *b* (Cross, “Newly Found Inscriptions,” 5). Both are probably simple scribal errors (ibid.).

³⁰⁶ Mazar, *Archaeology*, 362; Naveh, *Early History*, 37–39; Cross, “Newly Found Inscriptions,” 7.

³⁰⁷ The patronymic *bn ḥnt* also occurs on other onomastica (Cross, “Newly Found Inscriptions,” 7). The phrase should be understood as a PN with the first *bn* omitted as is often the case. The taking of a name related to the war goddess by military families was not uncommon (see ibid. and the literature cited there).

³⁰⁸ Milik and Cross, “Inscribed Javelin-Heads,” 7.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. See below.

³¹⁰ Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 126–27 stress that “*ḥbt* is to be understood as an epithet of the goddess.” “Lion Lady” is thus “misleading; because of her aggressive character, the epithet calls the goddess a ‘lioness.’ She is not ‘Mistress of the Lion(s)’” (127 n. 8).

³¹¹ Milik and Cross, “Inscribed Javelin-Heads,” 8.

³¹² Cross, “The Origin,” 13* and n. 33.

³¹³ *CMHE* 33: *ḥbḥt(u)* is an “old epithet of Asherah” and means the “One of the Lion” or the “Lion Lady” (cf. also 34).

³¹⁴ So Maier, *ḤAḤERAH*, 167, 194, who also notes that Anat’s connections with the lions is weak, as is Astart’s (cf. Milik and Cross, “Inscribed Javelin-Heads,” 8).

³¹⁵ Dever, “Asherah, Consort of Yahweh?,” 28. He summons support for his position from the *bnḥnt* arrowhead but this is a patronymic (as he acknowledges), not a further description of *ḥbt*. The Anat-identification forces him to assume a “bewildering fluidity in the conception of many Northwest Semitic deities” (28) so as to relate the term, finally, back to Asherah. Indeed, he makes “Lion Lady” to be, finally, “one of the epithets of the great Mother Goddess” (29).

³¹⁶ Maier, *ḤAḤERAH*, 167.

³¹⁷ See *DNWSI* 1:397; *KAI* #21 (1:4). Milik and Cross seem to prefer a South- or Proto-Canaanite dialect (“Inscribed Javelin-Heads,” 9, 15; cf. 14).

Anat” warrior-class.³¹⁸ However, Cross thinks the situation might be simpler: one need “suppose only that members of archers’ guilds in various periods commonly were votaries of ʾAnat-Labišt, goddess of war and probably patroness of archers”³¹⁹ though it is possible that the arrows were used, not in battle, but in belomancy.³²⁰ Here again the most important contribution these objects make to the present study is not their precise function, but the witness they provide to the existence of a leonine term—in this case, a *feminine* form—used as the theophoric element in a PN from IA I Israel/Palestine. They are further evidence that the lioness and the goddess, indeed the lioness-goddess, were known in the area at this time.

The PN *kpr* appears on a seal that may be either Hebrew or Moabite (**fig. 3.159**).³²¹ It may mean “lion,” though other options exist.³²² The PN *kprh* has been found on one of the Arad ostraca (60.1), though the *p*, *r*, and *h* are uncertain.³²³ Gogel and Lemaire both understand the name, “Kephirah,” to be related to the root meaning “young lion.”³²⁴ If they are correct, it is significant that the PN would appear to be feminine, at least in morphology if not in referent.³²⁵

Finally, it should be pointed out that some PNs containing the element *ḥr*—for example, *ḥryhw* (e.g., Arad 26.1; Khirbet el-Kom 3.1–2) or *ḥryw* (Samaria 50.2, 4.4)³²⁶—may refer, not to “light” (*ḥwr*), as most scholars typically assume, but to “lion.”³²⁷ This is, however, far from certain and must remain tentative; given the long tradition of PNs written with a word for

³¹⁸ Cf. Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 126.

³¹⁹ Cross, “The Origin,” 13* n. 33, comparing the Ugaritic Aqhat epic. He thus disagrees with Mazar’s opinion, expressed in “The Military Élite of King David,” *VT* 13 (1963): 310–20 and, more recently, in idem, *Archaeology*, 362–63. As already noted, in his later work, Cross prefers Asherah.

³²⁰ See S. Iwry, “New Evidence for Belomancy in Ancient Palestine and Phoenicia,” *JAOS* 81 (1961): 32–34. Cross himself is inclined to think the El-Khadr find is “more easily explained as the contents of the quiver of an archer, perhaps booty taken from a Canaanite archer in one of the frequent raids of the Israelites of the hill country on the rich cities of the plain” (“The Origin,” 13* n. 33).

³²¹ *CWSSS* #1079. It also appears on *CWSSS* ##1086 and 1087, which Avigad/Sass classify as Phoenician or Aramaic (or Ammonite), as well as on cylinder seal (Galling, “Beschriftete Bildsiegel,” 195 and no. 157).

³²² See *CWSSS* 508 and the debate between Sanders and Layton discussed in Appendix 1.

³²³ Note the discussion in André Lemaire, *Inscriptions hébraïques*, Volume 1: *Les ostraca: Introduction, traduction, commentaire* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1977), 216–17.

³²⁴ Sandra Landis Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew* (SBLRBS 23; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 341, 399; Lemaire, *Inscriptions*, 217.

³²⁵ Lemaire, *Inscriptions*, 217. See further Appendix 1.

³²⁶ See Lemaire, *Inscriptions*, 36 and 248, respectively.

³²⁷ Especially in instances where the *waw* is not retained. See *CWSSS* 485 and Jeaneane D. Fowler, *Theophoric Personal Names in Ancient Hebrew: A Comparative Study* (JSOTSup 49; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 113.

“light,” it is just as likely, if not in fact more probable, that *lṣ* is simply defectively written for *lṣr*.

Also far from certain is the vexed question of *lṣl* in the Mesha inscription (*KAI* #181 line 12).³²⁸ Though Moabite in language and provenance, the *lṣl* mentioned in the text refers to some *Israelite* object and thus merits treatment. Unfortunately, the text cannot be engaged in all its details and complexities here. Suffice it to say that the meaning of *lṣl* is extremely controverted—especially when conjoined with the following word, *dwdh*—with a number of different translations offered.³²⁹ A smattering of these include:

- “altar-hearth of Daudoh”
- “Arel its commander [or: chief]”
- “its (i.e., the city’s) beloved [deity]”
- “lion figure of David”
- “Orḫl its [i.e., the city’s] David”³³⁰

In my judgment, a decision on what exactly the *lṣl dwdh* was is probably irrecoverable on the basis of this text alone and perhaps even further philological study.³³¹ The presence of a large number of iconographical pieces, however, that portray the lion-image in a number of contexts—not the least of which is the cultic—may indicate that the two main options for interpreting *lṣl* (namely, that it is either an “altar-hearth” or a “lion figure”) present a false dichotomy. Perhaps the *lṣl* is related to the cult—perhaps even to a particular deity (*dwd[h]*, *lṣ*, or *yhw[h]*)—and, at the same time, is related to the lion.³³²

³²⁸ Some scholars restore אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה at the end of line 17/beginning of line 18, producing “A[rie]ls of YHWH” (see Kent P. Jackson and J. Andrew Dearman, “The Text of the Meshaḥ Inscription,” in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab* [ed. A. Dearman; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989], 93–95).

³²⁹ Note the opinion of F. I. Andersen: “the meaning of this phrase remains as obscure as ever” (“Moabite Syntax,” *Or* 35 [1966]: 81–120; citation from 90); cf. *KAI* 2:169. More recent scholars have concurred. See Kent P. Jackson, “The Language of the Meshaḥ Inscription,” in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription*, 112.

³³⁰ These options are those collated by Gerald L. Mattingly, “Moabite Religion and the Meshaḥ Inscription,” in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription*, 236. See further there for references as well as *DNWSI* 1:100–101.

³³¹ *Contra* Mattingly, “Moabite Religion,” 236–37: “Of course, the ultimate solution to this translation problem *must* be found in the realm of philology, perhaps with the recovery of more comparative data from as yet undiscovered texts” (emphasis mine).

³³² Cf. Gösta W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 580 and n. 3, who thinks that the *lṣl* “most probably was a lion postament for a deity statue.” Cf. earlier idem, “An Archaeological Picture of Iron Age Religions in Ancient Palestine,” *Studia Orientalia* 55 (1984): 3–31, especially 17–18; Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 77. Herbert Niehr’s assessment—“The lack of etymological and semantic explanations for this term makes the argument very hypothetical and far from certain, but nevertheless interesting”—is apropos (“In Search of YHWH’s Cult Statue,” in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the*

The structure of the inscription would seem to support such an interpretation.³³³ If so, this text might have especial import for the understanding of 2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22 (see Chapter 2 and Excursus 1: Ariel). But again, such judgments must remain open-ended and must be correlated with the significant philological work that has been done on these texts.³³⁴ One notes, finally, that *brl* is also attested as a PN on a Hebrew seal, where this individual is the father of *bbšl* (**fig. 3.160**).

3.8. CONCLUSION

Despite its length, this chapter has only presented and discussed a *portion* of the finds bearing on the lion as an image on archaeological *realia* from ancient Israel/Palestine in the Late Bronze I–Iron III/Persian Period eras. Even so, the material collected here shows a broad chronological and geographical distribution of the lion on artifacts found throughout the area (see **Map 3.1**). Moreover, these materials provide enough data in order to discuss the use and function of the lion as an image on such *realia*. It remains here to summarize briefly and synthesize this large amount of data, particularly in light of how these objects contextualize the lion image.³³⁵

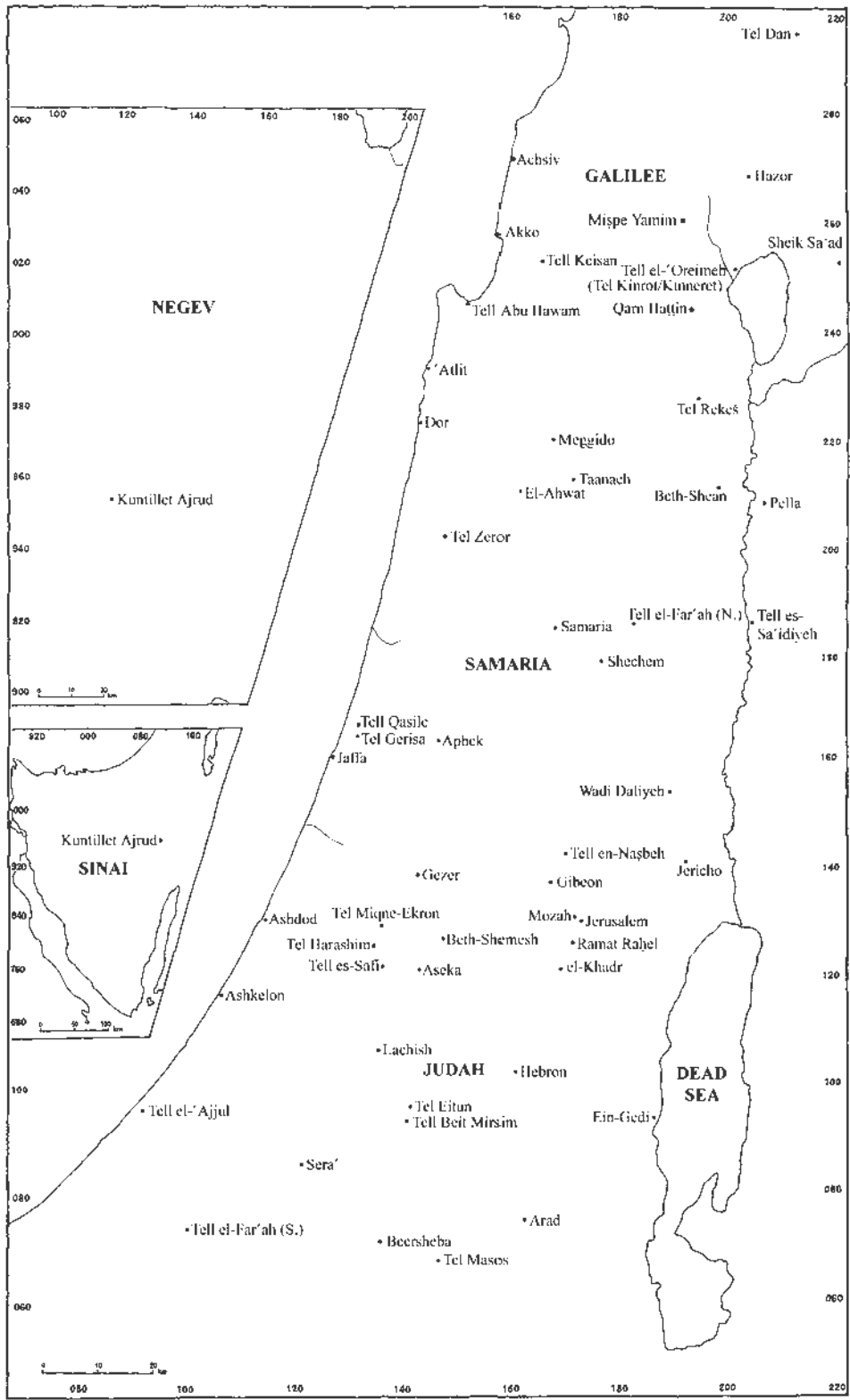
This overview of the lion in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine has revealed a wide use of the lion as an image on various objects, most notably those dealing with the *cult and religion* (e.g., **figs. 3.6, 3.15–16, 3.20, 3.21–22, 3.75–78, 3.80, 3.105–108, 3.119, 3.134**). An association with the *goddess*, which was evident in the earlier periods (e.g., **figs. 3.1, 3.3–5, 3.76–78, 3.82–84, 3.86, 3.158**), suffers a decline until it virtually disappears in the IA III/Persian Period. Association with the *male deity* (e.g., **figs. 3.7–10, 3.35–51, 3.111**), while perhaps not attested as early as the goddess connections, seems to remain much more constant, extending even into the later periods, though with significant evidence of external influence (e.g., **figs. 3.109–110, 3.112–118**). Also constant is an association of the lion with the *king* or *mighty person*. This motif, present from the earliest period (e.g., **figs. 3.11–14, 3.67–**

Ancient Near East [ed. Karel van der Toorn; Leuven: Peeters, 1997], 78). See further Excursus 1: Ariel.

³³³ Note the parallelism with lines 17–18, which has been restored *[k]ly yhw h* or *l[r]l/y yhw h* (see above). See Jackson, “The Language,” 112, though he opts for “altar-hearth”; cf. Mattingly, “Moabite Religion,” 236.

³³⁴ Much depends on the interpretation of *dwd/dwdh* as well as the (broken and somewhat uncertain) *l[s]bh* (lines 12–13). Whatever the *lrl* is, one must be able to “drag” (*s^{ab}*) it. As for Benaiah, how does one “strike” (הכה H = presumably “kill”) two lion postaments or altar-hearths? See further Excursus 1: Ariel.

³³⁵ For the importance of context, or what Keel/Uehlinger call “complex constellations,” see *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 12–13, 394, especially 13. Cf. Sass, “The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals,” 222. Cf. also Keel, *Deine Blicke*, 45. Idem, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 161 and 195–98 has catalogued many of the lion-scarabs according to the following motifs: Lion, Lion over Prey, Lion over Humans, Lion over Caprids, Lion over Crocodiles, Lion as Object of Human Activity. Note also his general summary of the lion’s presentations (ibid., 196).



Map 3.1. Distribution of Lion Artifacts (Selected) in Ancient Israel/Palestine.

74, 3.93, 3.96–100), continues into the latest periods, again with notable foreign influence (e.g., **figs. 3.112–126, 3.143–144**).

The objects demonstrate that, as an image, the lion lends to the deity or to the monarch/mighty one its own inherent power, whether in alliance or as threat. The lion represents the *archetypal enemy* (e.g., **figs. 3.2, 3.7–9, 3.11, 3.34, 3.52–53, 3.56–66, 3.72–74, 3.81, 3.93–94, 3.98, 3.102–104, 3.109–114, 3.116, 3.119–125, 3.127–128, 3.135–138, 3.143–144, 3.151–156**) and yet its prowess lends itself to reuse in contexts that highlight the power of the *deity, monarch/mighty one*, or, perhaps, *owner* of the image (e.g., **figs. 3.1, 3.3–4, 3.7–13, 3.46–51, 3.67–74, 3.81–84, 3.86, 3.93, 3.102, 3.104, 3.109–126, 3.135–138, 3.142–158**). Sometimes the two elements are present in the selfsame image (e.g., **figs. 3.7–11, 3.72–74, 3.81, 3.93, 3.109–125, 3.143–144, 3.151–157**), perhaps most noticeably in the orthostats (**figs. 3.17–23, 3.87**) that threaten outsiders while simultaneously protecting insiders.³³⁶ All of these points are quite similar to the textual material from the Hebrew Bible that was presented in Chapter 2.

In each case, it should be stressed that the power and threat of the lion image are dependent on the lion's actual—that is, its naturalistic—power as a beast of prey. Hence, it is not surprising to find a number of *naturalistic presentations* of the lion in the archaeological record (e.g., **figs. 3.2, 3.5–6, 3.26–27, 3.34, 3.52–53, 3.56–58, 3.66, 3.94, 3.103–104, 3.134–142, 3.151–152**). Yet, even here one must wonder if such presentations do not serve a larger, metaphorical purpose (see above).

The lion is also found on a number of *cultic objects* or in *cultic assemblages* (e.g., **figs. 3.6, 3.15–16, 3.20, 3.21–22, 3.75–78, 3.80, 3.105–108, 3.119, 3.134**). Indeed, the latter along with *official contexts* seem to comprise the majority of the find spots for lion-image-bearing artifacts. Here, too, the ability of the lion to be used in, and its connections with, the realms of divinity and monarchy receive further support.

Finally, the *connections* of the lion image in the archaeology of ancient Israel/Palestine must be highlighted. Obviously—as in the case of objects from Tell Qasile (e.g., **fig. 3.75**) or other Philistine sites, or in the case of objects that were imported to places like Samaria (e.g., **fig. 3.93**), not to mention many, if not most, of the LB discoveries—not all of these images can be taken to reflect ancient *Israel's* (i.e., ancient Israelites') perception or use of the lion image simply because many are imports and/or produced and used in the pre-Israelite period or by non-Israelites living in the land. Still, the fact that such objects, whether pre-Israelite or not, imported or local, LB or IA III/Persian Period, were found *within the geographical area of ancient Israel/Palestine* makes it at least possible that a particular instance of the image in question might have been known—perhaps even well known—in the area. Each of these objects, therefore, comprise part of the corpus of leonine imagery that was known on

³³⁶ The few exceptions (e.g., **figs. 3.54–55, 3.134, 3.139–141**) prove the rule.

the ground and that was available in the area during these time periods. But even in those pieces that are most probably Israelite in provenance, date, and so forth, it is clear that the imagery used and the style employed typically carries connections to other regions and their respective artistic traditions. Broadly speaking, the influences are either southern or northern.³³⁷ Southern, Egyptianizing influence is apparent on a number of pieces (e.g., **figs. 3.3, 3.9, 3.11–13, 3.24, 3.29, 3.32–33, 3.35–45, 3.64–65, 3.71, 3.86, 3.88, 3.90–91, 3.98–100, 3.109–110, 3.150–154**). Northern influence—be it Phoenician, Syrian, Hittite, Mesopotamian, Babylonian, or Persian—is just as evident on others (e.g., **figs. 3.1, 3.10, 3.17–20, 3.23, 3.28, 3.52–53, 3.80, 3.84–85, 3.87, 3.92–93, 3.102–103, 3.120–124, 3.126–128, 3.143–144**).³³⁸

Such connections raise questions of influence and dependence: Might the use of the lion in both the Hebrew Bible and the archaeology of ancient Israel/Palestine be directly dependent on or especially derived from the use of the lion image in the literature and iconography of the ancient Near East? The evidence presented in this chapter has already demonstrated that influence, dependence, and relation are probable and, in fact, given in the case of many of the iconographical materials from ancient Israel/Palestine. How that fact might bear on the use of the lion as a literary device in the Hebrew Bible, and how ancient Near Eastern literature might also have impacted the biblical materials remains to be seen. These questions cannot be answered without first investigating the use of the lion in both the art and literature of the ancient Near East, a task taken up in Part II of this work.

³³⁷ Better: southern *and* northern. Cf. Keel/Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 19; Shuval, *Studien III*, 101.

³³⁸ This is not to neglect the *western* connections (i.e., the Aegean), for example in the Heracles iconography (**figs. 3.112–118**, cf. **figs. 3.119, 3.125**), though these too were probably often mediated through sites northern (e.g., Phoenicia).

PART II

Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Ancient Near East

Chapter 4

“The King of Assyria Ate It... the King of Babylon Gnawed Its Bones” (Jer 50:17): The Lion in the Art and Literature of the Ancient Near East

“Lions...were represented from very early times; indeed, by its strength, vigour, and beauty the lion impressed itself so profoundly upon the consciousness of the races who inhabited Western Asia that one may say without exaggeration that there was no period in which it was not represented in art, or compared figuratively with the superhuman qualities of some divinity.”¹

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter concluded that the image of the lion in ancient Israel/Palestine should not be treated in isolation from the other civilizations and cultures of the Near East. The present chapter takes up that very task by pursuing the connections and relationships of the lion image found in the Hebrew Bible and the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine via comparative analysis. This analysis obviously involves attention to the broader Near Eastern context, but is immediately complicated by two main problems.

The first is that the ancient Near East is not a unified entity; it spans thousands of miles, numerous cultures and languages, and several millennia. Moreover, as Chapter 1 indicated, it is no longer appropriate to limit the comparative database to texts alone. Considering only the probable literacy rate in antiquity, it becomes readily apparent that non-textual material must be included in any comparative analysis. There can be little doubt, that is, that it was (primarily?) via non-textual media that many people received their information, that propaganda was perpetuated, and so forth. Hence, in this chapter, two *foci* are in order: both text and art must be assessed in any attempt to understand the lion as both image and metaphor within the broader ancient Near Eastern context(s). And, within that broader context(s), special care must be taken to not monolithize the evidence from different areas, periods, regional “dialects,” and so forth.

This leads directly into the second problem: the ubiquity of the lion image in these cultures and periods. An example from outside the Near East highlights the situation: the lion already appears among the many animals depicted in the cave of Lascaux, where some of the oldest known artistic

¹ E. Douglas Van Buren, “Mesopotamian Fauna in the Light of the Monuments,” *AfO* 11 (1936–37): 7.

remains yet discovered were found.² But this prehistoric example could easily be multiplied for later, historic periods and for the ancient Near East proper.³ Indeed, two of the earliest known pieces of art from the historical period of the ancient Near East contain lions: The Lion or Battlefield Palette from Predynastic Egypt and the Warka/Uruk Stela from Protoliterate Mesopotamia.

It is obvious, therefore, that restrictions and delimitations are necessary. There is simply too much material to conduct an exhaustive investigation, even if one were to concentrate on only the textual, or only the artistic, evidence. Hence, this chapter is not organized according to iconographic or linguistic “dialects” or on regional variations, as important as these may be and, in fact, actually are. Instead, the material is organized according to rubric or function, as these will prove most useful in assessing the meaning and significance of leonine imagery and metaphor in the Hebrew Bible.⁴ Moreover, within the various categories discussed in this chapter only a few representative examples can be provided. These are often taken from widely disparate locales and time periods to show continuities or discontinuities in the motifs. In short, this chapter paints with a broad brush in even broader strokes. While this has its disadvantages, especially from a strictly historical perspective, it is nevertheless permissible and made possible in the first place by the relative stability of the lion image within the various rubrics outlined here.⁵

² See Mario Ruspoli, *The Cave of Lascaux: The Final Photographs* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986), especially 54–55. The drawing on p. 55 dates to ca. 12,000. Lascaux contains a total of 29 lions out of some 2,188 figures. The relative rarity of the lion and its placement in the structure of the caves (“always in secret or marginal situations at the ends of shafts and passages”) probably reflects “the fear they inspired in the prehistoric hunters as well as the fact that they were much scarcer than the herbivores” (ibid., 85). Ruspoli characterizes the artistic presentation as “relatively naïve” and perhaps due to the fact that the artists had no opportunity to look closely at lions. Even so, some naturalistic items are present: lines from the mouth apparently signifying the lion’s roar; and one of the lions is depicted urinating (ibid.).

³ Sentiments similar to the epigraph above could be repeated many times over. For the lion in very early materials, see, e.g., Manfred Robert Behm-Blancke, *Das Tierbild in der altmesopotamischen Rundplastik* (BF 1; Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1979); Heinz F. Friederichs, *Zur Kenntnis der frühgeschichtlichen Tierwelt Südwestasiens unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der neuen Funde von Mohenjo-Daro, Ur, Tell Halaf und Maikop* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1933); Wolfgang Heimpel, *Tierbilder in der sumerischen Literatur* (Studia Pohl 2; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968); and Jürgen Schmidt, “Ein frühsumerischer Löwe,” *BaghM* 9 (1978): 22–24 and Pls. 6–7.

⁴ It goes without saying that an item might play more than one function depending on its content and context. For the impact of iconographical context on interpretation, see, e.g., John Malcolm Russell, *The Writing on the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999).

⁵ One must be careful not to impose such stability *a priori*. Nevertheless, the ubiquity, trans-contextual, and trans-cultural use of the lion image may be an example of the kind of unity in the ancient Near East of which Hallo and Simpson speak. See William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (2d ed.; Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College, 1998), especially v and vii. For an advocate of the relative

Furthermore, such a presentation is not without its own merits and distinct advantages. As Anthony Green states:

Only by comparison of elements in different artistic media, and from a large corpus of material, can we distinguish features that were necessarily a part of the figure or symbol *per se* from those that merely follow the dictates of a particular craft and mode of expression or from aberrant forms. Thus, while it is true that certain pieces will of course provide more immediate insight than others into the meaning of an element or theme...the apparent conclusions should be checked against the background of the accumulation of data from differing crafts and, where appropriate, differing periods....In this way, different media of expression may provide complementary kinds of evidence.⁶

Even so, whenever possible, an attempt has been made here to note regional and linguistic/artistic distinctives within the broader categories of the lion as symbol of threat, image for monarch or deity, element in temple or palace architecture, and so forth.⁷ Unfortunately, given the purposes and limits of this chapter, aesthetic analysis for its own sake plays at best a minor role.

One final consideration: as discussed in Chapter 3, the time span from the Late Bronze Age through the Iron Age III/Persian Period (1500–332) is most likely to have been the period wherein the biblical materials were composed, collected, and so forth. It is within this same period, then, that Israel and Judah were most likely to have been influenced by and to have interacted with their ancient Near Eastern neighbors. Hence, this same chronological span deserves special attention in the ancient Near Eastern evidence. Nevertheless, it is often necessary to discuss very early material in order to set the comparative material into its own context as well as to get a sense of its significant developments and continuities.⁸ Unfortunately, many of the artifacts recovered from the ancient Near East do not come from controlled excavations; in such cases, their provenance must be surmised on the basis of art-historical data. Dating literary compositions is no less difficult. But, happily, chronological precision in some

stability of imagery in general, and the lion in particular, see Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (13 vols.; New York: Pantheon Books, 1953–1968), especially 7:29–86.

⁶ Anthony Green, "The Lion-Demon in the Art of Mesopotamia and Neighbouring Regions: Materials Towards the Encyclopaedia of Mesopotamian Religious Iconography, I/1," *BaghM* 17 (1986): 145.

⁷ For monograph-length treatments, see Ursula Schweitzer, *Löwe und Sphinx im alten Ägypten* (ÄF 15; Glückstadt and Hamburg: J. J. Augustin, 1948); Constant de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens du lion dans l'Égypte ancienne* (2d ed.; ed. Gaber Aly Hussein; Luxor: Gezirat El Bairat, n. d. [1980?]; 1st ed. = Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951); and Mary Kathleen Brown, "Symbolic Lions: A Study in Ancient Mesopotamian Art and Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1973).

⁸ The same holds true for later materials insofar as they are helpful in tracing subsequent developments and trajectories.

cases is not absolutely essential to the argument. It is enough to note the attestation of certain motifs within certain broad chronological horizons.⁹

With these caveats in place, the present chapter can begin. The discussion proceeds from treatments of the lion as enemy and threat; to treatments of the lion as monarch/mighty one and thus victor; to treatments of the lion and the gods; and, finally, to the use of the lion as a protective guardian of entrances. Each of these main categories is familiar from the materials presented in Chapters 2–3, and each is replete with subcategorizations depending on the nature of the data (e.g., the lion and the gods in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, and so forth).

4.2. THE LION AS ENEMY, THREAT TO ORDER, WICKED

The motif of the lion as an enemy, a threat to order, or a wicked entity that must be overcome is among the oldest attested for the animal. Indeed, the lion plays such a role in the Uruk/Warka stela (**fig. 4.1**), where four lions attack a royal figure, twice depicted repulsing them with bow and spear. This early piece, regardless of the exact circumstances that gave rise to it,¹⁰ highlights the close connection between the lion as enemy/threat and the monarch/mighty one's battle with it, thereby protecting and restoring order. This presentation of the king as defender against and fighter of lions is developed extensively in later periods and will be taken up in greater detail below (§4.3.1). Here it is enough to point out that, already in this very early piece, the lion is conceived of as a threat, dangerous and aggressive—one that, when encountered, must be fought.

⁹ Periodization follows *OEANE* 5:411. Specific dates for Egyptian dynasties and rulers follow K. A. Kitchen, "Egypt, History of (Chronology)," *ABD* 2:322–31. For Assyrian and Babylonian rulers the dates follow, wherever possible, A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC (1114–745 BC)* (2 vols.; RIMA 2–3; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991–1996) [hereinafter: RIMA 2 or RIMA 3]; or Grant Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC)* (RIMB 2; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). Otherwise, the dates follow J. A. Brinkman, "Appendix: Mesopotamian Chronology of the Historical Period," in A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (rev. ed. completed by Erica Reiner; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 335–48. Dates for Hittite rulers follow Trevor Bryce, *The Kingdom of the Hittites* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹⁰ See Henri Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (5th ed.; Pelican History of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 34; and H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement: An Essay on Space and Time in the Representational Art of the Ancient Near East* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 152. André Parrot, *Sumer: The Dawn of Art* (New York: Golden, 1961), 76, comments that, in the early and later (Neo-Assyrian) periods, "the hunting of wild beasts was as much a defensive measure as a royal sport; the cattle needed constant protection." The defensive interpretation is more likely for the earlier material than is the case for Assurbanipal who kept his game in cages prior to his hunt (see further §4.3.1.2 below).

4.2.1. *The Lion Attacking Its Prey*

There can be little doubt that underlying and lending force to such a threatening presentation of the lion is the lion's skill as a predator. This predatory prowess also comprises the dominant part of the lion image when it is used as a metaphor for deity or royalty (see §§4.3.2 and 4.4.3 below). But the predation of the lion is also found in many non-metaphorical contexts. Indeed, depictions of and references to the lion attacking its prey in the wild are both widespread and early. An early Egyptian example is found in the Predynastic Two Dog Palette (**fig. 4.2**). The reverse depicts two lions attacking two small horned animals. The mouths of the lions and the caprids meet but, given the general *mêlée* of animals, this is best interpreted antagonistically. Apparently the lions are attacking (or about to attack) the muzzle of the caprids, a technique often used by lions to asphyxiate their prey.¹¹ A clearer example of this same technique is found on the Old Kingdom tombs of Ptahhotep¹² and Mereruka (**fig. 4.3**), as well as in the later (Dynasty 12) tomb of Senbi (**fig. 4.4**).

Returning to Mesopotamia, we find a large number of pieces from the Protoliterate and Early Dynastic periods that showcase the lion attacking animals. These representations occur on various types of media, including cylinder seals (**figs. 4.5–6**);¹³ vases, vessels (see **figs. 4.8–11**), and bowls (**fig. 4.12**); as well as plaques (**fig. 4.13**) and reliefs (**fig. 4.14**). What strikes one as noteworthy about such pieces, quite apart from their beauty and antiquity, is their *zoological accuracy*. Lions do, in fact, attack animals in the ways depicted on these objects.¹⁴ Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in the wonderful seal impression from the Jemdet-Nasr period that depicts a lion pulling out the hind leg of a bull it is pursuing (**fig. 4.15**). One suspects, therefore, that these depictions were based, at least to some extent, on actual observation of lions in the wild.¹⁵

Regardless of that possibility, depictions of the lion's encounter with other animals are portrayed in ways that go beyond the naturalistic. Already in the Warka vase (**fig. 4.9**), the presentation is tending toward the symbolic and schematic. In this regard, one might note the cult vessel where a lion straddles

¹¹ See George B. Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion: A Study of Predator-Prey Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 265–66 and Pl. 32.

¹² See Jaromir Malek, *Egyptian Art* (London: Phaidon, 1999), fig. 67.

¹³ Note also the seal from Habuba Kabira South (**fig. 4.7**). The unusual posture of the hind legs of the lions may indicate a resting posture in which case hunting is not a dominant thematic.

¹⁴ See Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 240–51, 259–62, and 263–67.

¹⁵ But see Edith Porada, "Problems of Style and Iconography in Early Sculptures of Mesopotamia and Iran," in *In memoriam Otto J. Brendal: Essays in Archaeology and the Humanities* (ed. Larissa Bonfante and Helga von Heintze; Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1976), 4, for some cautionary remarks: "Probably there was not only one meaning but several for which the contest of the two most powerful animals known to early Mesopotamian and Iranian man could serve as simile." See further below.

two bulls in a pose that is both anthropomorphic and strongly reminiscent of the so-called “Gilgamesh” stance (**fig. 4.16**). Also often highly stylized are the countless seals containing contest scenes.¹⁶ These depict the lion encountering a bull, caprid, or other prey while upraised on its hind legs. Additionally, the lion and its prey may cross each other’s body or other animals that may be present, which also criss-cross in such a fashion (see, e.g., **figs. 4.17–19**).¹⁷ Many of these seals also depict an anthropomorphic figure in combat with the lions and/or other animals in the scene (see, e.g., **fig. 4.20**).¹⁸ Yet, while such seals are legion, their exact interpretation and significance is not entirely clear. James B. Pritchard noted that the seals depicting anthropomorphic beings with animals and monsters are often interpreted by scholars “as representing the continual conflict which raged between man and the enemies of civilized life.”¹⁹ This observation, while vague, nevertheless also seems to hold true for seals that do not include an anthropomorphic figure: in this case the conflict is entirely zoological (though this is not to say that other, mythological connotations may not be present), played out between the predator and its prey. It is not surprising, but is also significant, that the predator *par excellence* in these contest scenes is the lion.

The threat the lion poses to animals, especially domestic livestock, naturally leads to efforts to dissuade the lion from its attack, a theme present in the contest scenes, as well as in seals that are directly devoted to that subject, as the seal in **fig. 4.21**. This type of motif continues into later periods, as, for instance, in a Middle Assyrian seal where the lion faces a nude hero with a spear while rampant over a caprid (**fig. 4.22**). Of course, the contest scene—which may, in part, derive from such encounters²⁰—also continued into later

¹⁶ See Dominique Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 72, 77–78; idem, *First Impressions: Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 192–97; and especially Othmar Keel, “Die Deutung der Tierkampfsszenen auf den vorderasiatischen Rollsiegeln des 3. Jahrtausends oder Texte als Störfaktoren,” in idem, *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden: Drei Fallstudien zur Methode der Interpretation altorientalischer Bilder* (OBO 122; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1992), 1–59.

¹⁷ For other Early Dynastic examples, see *ANEP*, 678; Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 56b; Othmar Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob: Eine Deutung von Ijob 38–41 vor dem Hintergrund der zeitgenössischen Bildkunst* (FRLANT 121; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), Abb. 11, 52.

¹⁸ Note also the goddess(es) kneeling on lion(s) in this seal. For other examples, see Dominique Collon, *Near Eastern Seals* (Interpreting the Past; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), fig. 40; Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, figs. 56a, 78a–c; Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, figs. 79–81, 82, 84–85.

¹⁹ *ANEP*, 330.

²⁰ Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 78: “We do not understand the implications of this [contest] theme...but a...design like illustration 83A [= **fig. 4.23**] shows that one of the sources of the friezes was the defence of herds and flocks against the depredations of lions.”

periods. The same holds true for the more naturalistic motif of the lion attacking prey, without interfering figures.

From the Akkadian period is a seal that shows lions attacking wild goats on a mountain (**fig. 4.24**). Beatrice Teissier has catalogued a number of Middle Bronze Age seals that include the motif of the lion attacking its prey (e.g., **figs. 4.25–28**). Though many of these seals are unprovenanced, special attention should be paid to an example from Ras Shamra (**fig. 4.29**). Also belonging to this period is a mould with a lion attacking oxen from eighteenth-century Mari (**fig. 4.30**).

Still later periods also know of the theme. From Late Bronze Age Carchemish comes a seal with the now familiar lion-attacking-caprid scene (**fig. 4.31**). Middle Assyrian seals show lions dominating caprids (**fig. 4.32**) or facing a winged horse over a foal (**fig. 4.33**). These depictions are not limited to the Assyrian materials: a clay plaque that is reportedly Kassite contains a lively drawing of a lion attacking a boar (**fig. 4.34**). From parts west comes the gold bowl from Ugarit (**fig. 4.35**), with lions attacking bulls, and the engraved bronze from Tyre (**fig. 4.36**), which shows a lion encountering various animals and fighting a griffin over the carcass of a goat.²¹

Numerous Iron Age examples could also be adduced. These include the silver and ivory plaque showing a lion and lioness attacking an antelope on a wooded hillside (**fig. 4.37**). An interesting Assyrian seal impression shows a lion attacking a bull with three of the lion's four legs placed on the bull in its attempt to bring the beast down (**fig. 4.38**). A Neo-Elamite cylinder seal from Susa (10th–9th century) shows a lion pursuing a caprid from behind (**fig. 4.39**). The fourth panel (from the top) of the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (858–824), shows a lion attacking a stag from behind with another lion in front of the stag in a wooded, mountainous region (**fig. 4.40**).²² Roughly contemporaneous is the basalt relief from Gozan showing a lion attacking a bull in a pose reminiscent of the contest scene and the naturalistic depictions of the lion rising up on its prey from behind to bite its neck (**fig. 4.41**). Also from the 9th century, or perhaps the 8th, is a cylinder seal with a lion attacking a nursing cow (**fig. 4.42**). Lastly, a number of unprovenanced West Semitic stamp seals also depict the lion attacking, or victorious over, its prey (**figs. 4.43–46**).²³

²¹ Cf. William C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953–59), 2:184 for a Thutmocide (Dynasty 18) seal of a lion preying on an addax.

²² As the inscription above the panel does not mention lions (see *ARAB* 1:211 [§592]), one wonders if the frieze is filler or descriptive of the country of the tribute-bearer (Marduk-apal-u^{ru}).

²³ Note also the early eighth-century example from Amman in Siegfried H. Horn, "A Seal from Amman," *BASOR* 205 (1972): 43–45, which, on the obverse, depicts a lion with an object in front of it. The object "looks as if it were some armless small human being or a poorly shaped bird, although some kind of a half-eaten prey may be intended" (*ibid.*, 44). Cf. **figs. 3.155–156** and the discussion there and note the roughly contemporaneous Hittite seal with lion(ness) and dismembered animal heads in John Boardman and Roger

The late Iron Age/Persian Period also knows of the lion attack and continues to use it in various contexts and media. Powerful examples can be seen in the use of the lion-attacking-bull motif in the monumental reliefs at fifth-century Persepolis, both on the Apadana (fig. 4.47) and on the staircase of the palace south of the citadel (fig. 4.48). Izak Cornelius' summary of the Apadana image holds true for both and, indeed, much of the material surveyed here: "The relief communicates one message—the overwhelming power of the lion."²⁴

That power, exemplified in large measure by the predation of the lion in the pieces outlined above, is also detailed in textual material. Notable are the laws in the Code of Hammurapi (ca. 1750) that deal with situations wherein a lion successfully attacks domestic animals. Law 244 reads: "If a man rents an ox or a donkey and a lion kills it in the open country, it is the owner's loss."²⁵ Law 266 is even more interesting as it places the lion's kill in parallel with the veritable "act of God" (*lipit ilim*): "If, in the enclosure, a plague of the god should break out or a lion make a kill, the shepherd shall clear himself before the god, and the owner of the enclosure shall accept responsibility for him for the loss sustained in the enclosure."²⁶ Such legislation can be taken as evidence that this type of situation was not unheard of nor unlikely during Hammurapi's reign (1792–1750).²⁷

Again, the same also holds true for later periods. The month of Tammuz in the sixteenth year (963) of the reign of Nabû-mukṣin-apli (978–943) is marked by mention of a lion that no one saw enter the city of Babylon, but that

Moorey, "The Yunus Cemetery Group: Haematite Scarabs," in *Insight Through Images: Studies in Honor of Edith Porada* (Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 21; ed. Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati et al.; Malibu: Undena, 1986), Pl. 18, illustration 23.

²⁴ Izak Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East: A Study of Selected Motifs," *JNSL* 15 (1989): 55. But see Margaret Cool Root, "Animals in the Art of Ancient Iran," in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Billie Jean Collins; HdO 64; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 201–203 for non-naturalistic and symbolic connotations to the lion-bull symplegma in Persepolis. For a similar perspective on the complex in much earlier periods, see Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 29–30. See also Excursus 2.

²⁵ *šumma awālum alpam imṣaram ḡurma ina ṣurim nṣum idd-kšu ana bḷiṣuma*; Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (2d ed.; SBLWAW 6; Atlanta: Scholars, 1997), 127; cf. also CAD N/2, 193.

²⁶ *šumma ina tarba'im lipit ilim ittabši ulu nṣum idd-k rḷūm maḡar ilim ubbamma miqitti tarba'im bḷi tarba'im imaj aršu*; Roth, *Law Collections*, 130. The translation is Roth's save for *lipit ilim*, which she translates as "epidemic" (ibid. and 142 n. 46).

²⁷ On the issue of shepherds losing sheep to lions, see, generally, J. N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (London: Routledge, 1992), 160, 280, 290. Other texts about lions devouring animals can be found in CAD N/2, 193–94.

was later spotted and killed.²⁸ Much later, Ashurbanipal (668–627) reports an outbreak of lions and the damage they caused in his “Great Hunting Text”:

Since I took my seat upon the throne of the father who begot me, Adad has sent his rains, Ea has op[ened up his fountains,] the forests have been thriving exceedingly, the reeds of the marshes have shot up so high there is no getting through them...The young of the lions²⁹ grew up there, in countless numbers, they...They became fierce and terrible through their devouring of herds, flocks, and people.³⁰ With their roaring the hills re[sound,] the beasts of the pl[ain] are terrified. They keep bringing down the cattle of the plain, they keep shedding the blood of men...As if the plague had broken loose, there were heaped up the corpses of dead men, cattle and [sheep]. The shepherds and herdsmen whose [flocks] the lions have ea[ten(?)]³¹ weep...The villages are in mourning day and night. Of the deeds of these lions they told me. In the course of my campaign into....their nests I broke up and the people, who inhabit the cities...”³²

References to the lion’s attack are not restricted to legal or annalistic literature, however. Other types of literature also reflect such encounters, even if only indirectly. The Babylonian Theodicy,³³ for instance, calls the wicked a “lion, the enemy of cattle.”³⁴ Though the lion in question here is certainly metaphorical, it is nevertheless instructive to see the antagonistic relationship between the lion and its prey highlighted in proverbial fashion in a wisdom text. That same relationship is also found in another wisdom text, the Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar, Saying 9 (lines 88–89a):³⁵

²⁸ x x x NA IG ina ITI. Duß-zī šā MU XVI KĀM¹ UR.MAē šā ereb-šū ana %li mam-ma la i-mu-ru i-na BAL.RI ereb ⁴UTU.ŠŪ.A i-na GIŠ.kirē VIII-ni-tum i-mu-ru-šu-ma id-k⁷.MEŠ-šū, ABC No. 17 iii.11-13a (pp. 137–38); cf. also CAD N/2, 193.

²⁹ ta-lit-ti UR.MAē.MEŠ.

³⁰ ina ū-kul-ti GUD.MEŠ ⁴i-e-ni u a-me-lu-ti in-na-ad-ru-ma e-zī-zu.

³¹ ša la-ab-bi ik[...]. For the reconstructed/restored text, see CAD L, 24.

³² K 2867, rev. 2-15; the full text (with German translation) can be found in Maximilian Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's* (3 vols.; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1916), 2:212-15. The translation above follows ARAB 2:363 (§935), with some modifications on the basis of Streck’s text. Streck thinks that the “nests” are the lions’ dens and that the king here may be playing the role of the war god in the “Mythus vom Labbu = ‘Löwen’” (2:214 n. 6). For the latter, see §4.2.3 below.

³³ The earliest datable manuscript of the Theodicy is from Assurbanipal’s libraries (*BWL*, 63) but the date of composition is certainly earlier, though probably not earlier than the Kassite period (*ibid.*, 66). Lambert himself puts it ca. 1000 (*ibid.*, 67).

³⁴ *gi-ir bu-li la-bā*, *BWL*, 74:61; cf. also CAD L, 24.

³⁵ James M. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 19-20 dates the Aramaic manuscript on paleographic grounds to the late 5th century. But, as the proverbs may have been originally discrete, determining a date for them—which must be earlier than the manuscript at any rate—is difficult. Lindenberger himself thinks that they probably “represent Aramean wisdom traditions fixed in writing as early as the seventh century, possibly even earlier” (*ibid.*, 20).

88 אריא י[הו]ה מסמה לאילא בסתר סוידא והו []
89a ודמה יאשר ובשרה יאכל

88 The lion *c[atche]s the scent* of the stag in (its) hidden *den*, and he [...] 89a and sheds its blood and eats its flesh.³⁶

Also proverbial—though the genre of the text itself is not sapiential—is the statement made by Erra in the Erra Epic: “One cannot snatch a carcass from the mouth of a roaring lion.”³⁷

To briefly summarize to this point: the presentation of the lion as a dominant and vicious predator is widespread from the earliest artistic remains and one of the earliest known law codes. The lion attack is stereotyped, whether that is in seal engraving or in proverbial saying. Images where some other animal gets the best of the lion are, therefore, quite rare (see, e.g., **figs. 4.49–51**).³⁸ It is tempting in these latter cases to assign some sort of deeper, perhaps mythological, meaning to the images.³⁹ Be that as it may, the *vast*

³⁶ The translation (slightly modified by the addition of brackets) follows Lindenberger, *Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 60; see there for discussion of the uncertain words (in italics in the translation). Cf. also idem in *OTP* 2:499. The saying actually ends with: “Just so is the meeting of [men]” (הא כן פנעהם זי [אנש]א). On the general sense of Saying 9, Lindenberger compares Aesop’s fable of the deer and the lion (*Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 60; *OTP* 2:499 n. k). Note also that אריה also occurs at the end of line 89. A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), 215 and 222 treated it as the beginning of Saying 10: “From fear of the lion the ass left his burden and will not carry it” (ibid., 222; his italics for uncertain letters/words), but Lindenberger states that such a reconstruction “does not fit the traces” (*OTP* 2:499 n. m); Cowley himself was uncertain about it (*Aramaic Papyri*, 235).

³⁷ *ina pi-i lab-bi na-bi-r[ā] ul ik-ki-mu šā-lam-tū* (Erra V.11); Luigi Cagni, *L’epopea di Erra* (Studi Semitici 34; Rome: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, 1969), 122; cf. also CAD L, 24. Note the continuation of the speech: “Where one is raging another cannot advise him!” (Luigi Cagni, *The Poem of Erra* [Sources from the Ancient Near East 1/3; Malibu: Undena, 1977], 58; cf. Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* [2d ed.; 2 vols.; Bethesda: CDL Press, 1996], 2:786: “So too no one can reason where one is in a frenzy”). The date of the Erra Epic has been much disputed; see Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*, 20–21 for a discussion. Cagni, though earlier arguing for a date in the first half of the 9th century (*L’epopea*, 37–42) apparently now concurs with von Soden, who dates the story to 765–763.

³⁸ Cf. **fig. 4.23** above, where the bull seems to gore the lion above it. Given the presence of the defending bull-men, it seems that the goring is only apparent and that the composition is intended to portray the strength of the lion (see Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 78; cited above). The same is probably true for **fig. 4.52**.

³⁹ Cf. Chapter 3 and, especially, **figs. 3.9, 3.54–55** (with discussion). Assigning mythological-religious significance is always difficult, however. See the important cautions expressed by W. G. Lambert, “Sumerian Gods: Combining the Evidence of Texts and Art,” in *Sumerian Gods and Their Representations* (ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller; Cuneiform Monographs 7; Groningen: Styx, 1997), 1–10. Moreover, the fact that when the lion is bested by another animal, that animal is typically a bull, combined with the observation that the far more frequent depiction is that of lion-besting-bull, warrants

majority of these presentations depict the lion as the (soon-to-be-victorious) aggressor. And, as the Warka stela and Ashurbanipal's annal also reveal, the lion's attack is not restricted to animal prey. The lion also attacks *humans*. Not surprisingly, then, this motif is also found in other literature and iconography.

4.2.2. *The Lion Attacking Humans*

Under this rubric, the contest scenes that often portray the lion in battle with an anthropomorphic figure, often nude and sometimes referred to (probably erroneously) as a "Gilgamesh" figure (see, e.g., **fig. 4.53** and above), ought to be mentioned. However, the anthropomorphic figure in other, comparable seals is often composite in nature, or indicated as (semi-)divine in some fashion (see, e.g., **fig. 4.54**), and thus probably a deity. It may be the case, then, especially given the traditions portraying Tammuz (Dumuzi) as a shepherd, that the nude human figure is also a deity, even if only a minor and, at present, unidentified one.⁴⁰ Whatever the case, such depictions often portray the anthropomorphic figure defending another beast from the lion (e.g., **fig. 4.55**). The focus of the lion attack is thus still oriented largely toward its animal prey even if it must reorient itself toward the new threat posed by the anthropomorphic (whether human or divine) figure. In short, such images, while certainly multi-layered and complex in meaning, may be considered as having more to do with the *hero* who encounters and defends against the lion than the lion attack proper (see further below, especially §4.3.1.1). In these cases, the lion is thus a general icon of threat and disorder.⁴¹

Even so, there are still a number of objects depicting a lion attacking a human victim. Among the most famous of these are the two ivories from Nimrud, dating to the 8th century, which show a lioness biting the neck of an Ethiopian (**fig. 4.56**). The two pieces are probably from a piece of furniture, perhaps a stool, and bear the marks of Phoenician influence, and were perhaps originally carved by a Phoenician craftsman.⁴²

caution in overinterpreting the indubitably important (if only given their scarcity) counter-examples.

⁴⁰ See Lambert, "Sumerian Gods," 3: "most probably it represents a minor god of which a plurality was conceived to exist."

⁴¹ Even so, the general impression left by these seals is related to shepherding conceptions, and this is especially true if the figure is divine and related to Tammuz (Dumuzi). The long-standing ancient Near Eastern tradition of the king as shepherd should not be forgotten in this regard. See, e.g., G. Johannes Botterweck, "Hirt und Herde im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient," in *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter und Stände: Festgabe seiner Eminenz dem hochwürdigsten Herrn Joseph Kardinal Frings Erzbischof von Köln zum goldenen Priesterjubiläum am 10. August 1960 dargeboten* (ed. Wilhelm Corsten, Augustinus Frotz, and Peter Linden; Köln: J. P. Bachem, 1960), 339-52; and Jack W. Vancil, "Sheep, Shepherd," *ABD* 5:1187-90.

⁴² See Leonard Woolley, *The Art of the Middle East* (New York: Crown, 1961), 118; J. E. Curtis in *Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum* (ed. J. E. Curtis and J. E. Reade; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 128.

Also dating to the Neo-Assyrian period are the fascinating impressions of a large stamp seal, probably coming from seventh-century Nineveh (**fig. 4.57**).⁴³ The large lion on the seal strides from left to right with its tail curled upward.⁴⁴ A smaller lion, in much the same pose, is found at the top of the seal above the larger lion. What is most interesting at this particular juncture, however, is that underneath the open mouth of the lion is a severed human head, and beneath the lion's rear legs is a severed human hand. Another fragment (**fig. 4.58**), shows a similar scene from a different seal, though the head—with much shorter hair—is definitely different.⁴⁵ Dominique Collon has stated that “[i]t is tempting to suggest that the seal could have been used to seal booty from Assyrian campaigns, with the different enemy heads indicating the origin of the booty.”⁴⁶ But, regardless of the exact status of the seal as royal or administrative in function, the body parts do not seem to be merely decorative or simply incidental filling motifs. Instead, they highlight in graphic fashion the triumph of the lion over a human victim.⁴⁷

It is notable that when one excludes the contest scenes and those instances where the lion either accompanies or represents the king in battle, the main Mesopotamian examples of the lion attacking humans are Neo-Assyrian in provenance.⁴⁸ Indeed, given the royal rhetoric and propaganda (both textual and visual) of the Neo-Assyrian empire,⁴⁹ the Nimrud ivories and the stamp

⁴³ See Dominique Collon in *Art and Empire*, 189 and figs. 195-97. See also Suzanne Herbordt, *Neuassyrische Glyptik des 8.-7. Jh. v. Chr.* (SAAS 1; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1992), 142 and Taf. 19, nos. 1, 2, 5.

⁴⁴ The upward curved tail is, of course, one of the lion's distinctive iconographical traits. See its textual representation in *CT* 38 38:61 and *CT* 40 32 r. 22 (cited in *CAD* N/2, 196).

⁴⁵ One should note the parallel found at Tel Dan (see **fig. 3.102**). Note also the Aramaic inscription that portrays a striding lion over what may be yet another one of these heads, though the image is unclear (**fig. 4.59**). Some have dated the piece to the mid-7th century, but Mark Lidzbarski was uncertain (*Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik* [Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1902], 1:236-38).

⁴⁶ Collon in *Art and Empire*, 189.

⁴⁷ Of course, the lion may be representative. E.g., if Collon's suggestion is correct, the lion becomes a symbol for the state or the king. If so, this seal could be considered below under the rubric of the lion and the king. But this does not negate the triumph of the lion over humans; rather, it only highlights the multiple contexts wherein an image can work and thereby find and provide meaning.

⁴⁸ Though mention should be made of the several (typically late) Middle Bronze Age seals, often Egyptian in inspiration, from ancient Israel/Palestine that show a lion over a prone human figure. See Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), illus. 5a-b; Gerhard Rühlmann, “Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg* [Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe] 13 (1964): Taf. Id-h. Further examples can be found in Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit* [2 vols. to date; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1995-).

⁴⁹ See Irene J. Winter, “Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs,” *Visual Communication* 7 (1981): 2-38; idem, “Art in Empire: The

seals may be seen as reflexes of that ideology and thus not naturalistic at all—at least not to the same extent as examples of the lion attacking *animals*. While it is difficult to say this with certainty, one can say that the motif of the lion attacking humans is frequently found on Egyptian pieces—from the Old Kingdom on (e.g., **figs. 4.60–62**), even into much later periods (e.g., **fig. 4.63**)—in both royal and cultic contexts. There are also a number of textual references that recount lions attacking humans or imply such an activity.

From Mesopotamia come various mentions of lions attacking and/or devouring people, especially slaves.⁵⁰ An example, from the Mari correspondence, is the letter that refers to a lion that killed a man and two women.⁵¹ Then there is the Middle Assyrian inscription on an offering, apparently brought when a lion had seized the offerer.⁵² Although this worshipper evidently escaped from a lion, other references indicate that such a scenario was highly unusual: “will he escape from an attack of the enemy, an attack of lions, an attack of robbers?”⁵³ It is, therefore, not surprising to find Gilgamesh saying that when he saw lions, he became afraid, and immediately prayed to Sin.⁵⁴

Mention of the moon-god is appropriate as the gods are frequently compared to the lion or have power over the lion, especially if they have lion familiars (see §§4.4.1–4.4.2 below). Another example, but one that highlights the threat the lion poses to human individuals is to be found in one of the curses in the treaty between Esarhaddon (680–669) and Baal of Tyre. Among other things, the treaty includes the following curse for disobedience to the treaty: “[May] Bethel and Anath-Bethel [deliv]er you to a man-eating lion.”⁵⁵

Royal Image and the Visual Dimensions of Assyrian Ideology,” in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7-11, 1995* (ed. S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 359-81; and Peter Machinist, “Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah,” *JAOS* 103 (1983): 719-37. The same general point I am making here also applies to Egyptian royal rhetoric and propaganda. See further below under the lion and the king (§4.3).

⁵⁰ See CAD N/2, 193-94; *AHW* 2:783.

⁵¹ *nš-su-um i-tu-uk-su ù 2 SAL i-tu-uk*; ARMT 10 35:14-15 (p. 66). See the other letters having to do with lions collected in Georges Dossin, “Documents de Mari,” *Syria* 48 (1971): 1-19.

⁵² *kī UR.MAœ u=abbitušu*, CAD N/2, 194, citing *AfO* 10 40 No. 89:11.

⁵³ *ina tšb nakri tšb UR.MAœ tšb j abb#tš*; CAD N/2, 194, citing IM 67692:295.

⁵⁴ UR.MAœ.MEŠ *a-mur-ma ap-ta-lâj a-na-ku* (Gilg IX.9); Simo Parpola, *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh: Cuneiform Text, Transliteration, Glossary, Indices and Sign List* (SAA Cuneiform Texts 1; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 101. For a translation, see Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1999), 70.

⁵⁵ *ina q#tš UR.MAœ #kili [limallû]kunu*, CAD N/2, 194, citing Baal rev. iv.6-7. Cf. *ANET*, 534; Delbert R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (BibOr 16; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964), 55.

A similar treaty-curse can be found in the earlier, Aramaic treaty between *KTK* and Arpad (Sefire), which can be dated to the mid-eighth century, probably prior to 754.⁵⁶ Sefire II A lines 9–10a, in particular, contain a list of predators that will prey upon those disobedient to the treaty. Unfortunately, the text is rather damaged here, so much so that many do not attempt to translate this section of the document. However, on the basis of the similar phraseology in Sefire I A lines 30b–31,⁵⁷ one can reconstruct the text as follows:

.. וַיֵּאָכֵל פֶּם אַרְיָה וּפֶם [..]. וּפֶם נִמְרָה] ..⁵⁸

and translate:

...and may] the mouth of a lion [eat] and the mouth of [a...] and the mouth of a leopard [...].

In short, this treaty, like that of Esarhaddon and Baal of Tyre, also invokes the image of the human-devouring lion as one of the terrible curses that will befall those who would break covenant.

But concern over the “man-eating” lion was not restricted to Northwest and East Semitic literatures. Egyptian literature also treats it. The Hymn of Nekh-Atum (or Khu-Atum) to the divinized King Amenhotep I (1525–1504) contains a passage that is quite similar to the curses found in the treaties discussed above, though the damaged state of the document precludes certainty.⁵⁹ The slightly later Great Hymn to the Aten mentions nighttime as the threatening hours when darkness prevails, when robbers do their work, and when “[e]very lion comes from its den [and a]ll the serpents bite.”⁶⁰ The Satire on the Trades, also called the Instruction of Dua-Khety,⁶¹ makes the threat of

⁵⁶ See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (rev. ed.; BibOr 19/A; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995), 19–20. Cf. *ANET*, 659.

⁵⁷ וַיֵּאָכֵל פֶּם חֹהּ וּפֶם עֶקֶר וּפֶם דְּבָהָה וּפֶם נִמְרָה: “[May the mou]th of a snake [eat], the mouth of a scorpion, the mouth of a bear [(?); on דְּבָהָה see Walter Beyerlin, ed., *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (hereinafter *NERT*) (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 259 and n. c.], the mouth of a panther.” See Fitzmyer, *Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*, 44–45, 127; *KAI* #222 (1:41, 2:260); Hillers, *Treaty-Curses*, 55. Cf. also *ANET*, 660 and *NERT*, 259.

⁵⁸ Fitzmyer, *Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*, 122. The uncertain characters are given as such in *KAI* #223 (1:43).

⁵⁹ The composition is to be dated to Dynasty 19, ca. 13th century (*NERT*, 39), though the text praises the divinized Amenhotep I who reigned earlier in Dynasty 18. The pertinent lines are 6–10: “The one who trusts you rejoices, but woe to anyone who attacks you...of a wild lion, puts his hand into a hole with a great snake in it; so you will see the power of Amenophis when he works wonders for his city” (*NERT*, 40).

⁶⁰ *AEI*, 2:97; see also *LAE*, 291; *ANET*, 370; *NERT*, 18; and Adolf Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians: A Sourcebook of Their Writings* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 289. On this imagery, one might compare the ceramic object with a lion and two snakes that bite two human figures from Tell Asmar (**fig. 4.64**).

⁶¹ Most of the copies belong to Dynasty 19, though there are a few Dynasty 18 copies. The original probably derived from the Middle Kingdom, if not earlier (see *ANET*, 432).

lions more global, applying it to the sorry lot of the messenger⁶² whenever he works. In such situations, he is forced to abandon family and property to face the threats of lions and Asiatics in the desert.⁶³ Given the satirical nature of the document (not to mention its numerous textual difficulties),⁶⁴ however, it is difficult to say how seriously this threat should be taken. Indeed, there may be no threat at all if the satire is complete and thoroughgoing.

Further examples of the lion-attacking-human motif could be adduced from some of the pieces discussed in greater detail below under different categories. But even the materials gathered here show that the fear of the lion was quite real and widespread, occurring in different artistic media and in various literary genres. One is tempted to see the lion's depredation of the animal world as the origin of the concern over the lion's attack on human targets, though the references in Mesopotamian annalistic literature are sufficient to indicate that that concern was much more than a literary development—it was actually quite real. This finds further corroboration, no doubt, in some of the visual data already presented and in further materials to be discussed below. If, however, one did wish to postulate a thematic development, it would seem quite plausible to surmise that the lion's prowess over both animal and human is what led to its being characterized as the threat *par excellence*, the next rubric to be discussed.

4.2.3. *The Lion as Threat Par Excellence*

Belonging to this category are instances where the lion is used metaphorically and/or symbolically as a broader threat or as the ultimate enemy, and where the emphasis seems to be placed less on the lion's ferocity or predatory prowess as on the lion as a general foe and threat to order. Several of the images already discussed could be included here (e.g., **figs. 4.1, 22, 54–55**). Much use of the lion in royal propaganda, especially in the ubiquitous lion-hunt (see §4.3.1.2), is also germane to this topic. It is therefore unnecessary to repeat this information (though it should be kept in mind); instead, mention should be made of how the lion is used in various ways to construct an almost—oftentimes an exactly—*supernatural* creature, one that threatens both the divine and human realms.

⁶² There is some debate over the term used here (see *AEL*, 1:192 n. 12; *LAE*, 333).

⁶³ *AEL*, 1:188: "The courier goes into the desert, / Leaving his goods to his children; / Fearful of lions and Asiatics, / He knows himself (only) when he's in Egypt. / When he reaches home at night, / The march has worn him out; / Be his home of cloth or brick, / His return is joyless." See also *ANET*, 433; *LAE*, 333; and Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians*, 70.

⁶⁴ On both, see *AEL*, 1:184–85.

Famous in this regard are the *Mischwesen*. Such creatures appear very early in the data,⁶⁵ but lie somewhat outside the central concerns of this work. Nevertheless, insofar as such fantastic creatures frequently connote the kind of animosity and threat under discussion here, and insofar as the lion often forms a large part of their composite being, they are relevant.⁶⁶ Leonine creatures with exceedingly long necks appear in such early pieces as the Narmer (**fig. 4.65**) and Two Dog Palettes (**fig. 4.2**), as well as in Protoliterate and Early Dynastic cylinder seals (e.g., **fig. 4.66**). In the first two examples, the creatures must be restrained, or they are shown attacking other animals, thus highlighting their power and the threat they pose to human and animal life. The early periods also witness such creatures sculpted in the round as, for instance, in a piece that may stem from Susa (**fig. 4.67**)⁶⁷—though it must be admitted that the exact intent of such a figure, whether malevolent or not, is not altogether clear. Even so, such fantastic creatures were common in the later periods as well. Lamaštu and Pazuzu come to mind (e.g., **fig. 4.68**),⁶⁸ as do the depictions of various other lion-headed demons from both Mesopotamia (**figs. 4.69–70**)⁶⁹ and Egypt (**fig. 4.71**)—several of whom actually played a protective function.⁷⁰ These creatures are also found on several unprovenanced West Semitic stamp seals (**figs. 4.72–73**),⁷¹ and their leonine form is confirmed in the textual

⁶⁵ Van Buren, “Mesopotamian Fauna in the Light of the Monuments,” 8; Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 85.

⁶⁶ Of interest is the *raison d'être* of such composite beings. E. Douglas Van Buren (*The Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia as Represented in Art* [AO 18; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1939], 7) posited that a relative lack of natural lions in Assyrian times in Mesopotamia led to a change in religious belief. While her speculation is intriguing, it must remain hypothetical, especially as the lion *qua* lion continued to be used as an iconographical and literary motif in great quantities throughout later periods. C. J. Gadd's opinion (cited in Green, “The Lion-Demon,” 150), that *Mischwesen* combined “the forces of all the predominant creatures so that they might be the more powerful to resist those adversaries whom it was their function to dispel” also makes sense. If it is correct, the lion probably contributed the majority of the elements relating to aggression, power, and ferocity.

⁶⁷ The iconographical parallels are largely from Susa (see Edith Porada, “A Leonine Figure of the Protoliterate Period of Mesopotamia,” *JAOS* 70 [1950]: 223–26).

⁶⁸ There are a number of such Lamaštu plaques/amulets. See, e.g., Simo Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (SAA 10; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1993), 230 fig. 30.

⁶⁹ The main study is Green, “The Lion-Demon,” 141–254. See also idem, “A Note on the ‘Lion-Demon,’” *Iraq* 50 (1988): 167–68.

⁷⁰ See Green, “The Lion-Demon,” 150; cf. 164.

⁷¹ Also on the Aramaic seal of Kullbayadšamaš (לכלבִּירֶשְׁמַשׁ), dating to the late-6th or 5th century (#802 in Nahman Avigad and Benjamin Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* [hereinafter *CWSSS*] [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997], 300). See Tallay Ornan, “The Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals: A Preference for the Depiction of Mortals,” in *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals* (ed. Benjamin Sass and Christoph Uehlinger; OBO 125; Fribourg: University Press

material. Lamaštu, for instance, is said to have the face of a mighty lion,⁷² whereas the evil *utukku* demon also had a lion's head.⁷³ Demonic leonine presentation also includes the metaphorical: In one text, a demonic hand seizes "like a lion."⁷⁴

This type of leonine creature posed a significant threat, even to the gods, as is shown in *CT* 13.33–34.⁷⁵ The text describes a giant serpent (or dragon)⁷⁶ that causes the gods to implore Sin to send someone to kill the beast, which they call a "lion" (*labbu*).⁷⁷ Despite some attempts to understand *labbu* differently, the creature envisioned in this text is best understood as "a composite monster or dragon with leonine and serpentine attributes."⁷⁸ After several gods refuse the invitation to take up the task, one god—perhaps Tishpak⁷⁹—finally succeeds in slaying the *labbu* with an arrow. The blood flows for "three years (and) three months, day and night."⁸⁰

It should be recalled that not all of these *Mischwesen* were malicious. Several served apotropaic functions, as, for instance, the lion centaur (*urma; lullû*) (fig. 4.74) who "fended off the attacks of the leonine demon

Fribourg Switzerland, 1993), 56 and n. 7. As mentioned in Chapter 3, a Lamaštu plaque has been found in Israel. See Mordechai Cogan, "A Lamashtu Plaque from the Judean Shephelah," *IEJ* 45 (1995): 155–61.

⁷² *pan* UR.MAœ *d%pini pan-ša šaknu*, *CAD* N/2, 195, citing 4R 58 i 36.

⁷³ *utukku lemnu qaqqad* UR.MAœ; *CAD* N/2, 195, citing *ZA* 43 16:46, also 44. See also Green, "The Lion-Demon," 153.

⁷⁴ *ša k%ma* UR.MAœ *l%batu am%lu*, *CAD* N/2, 195, citing Maqlu III 160.

⁷⁵ See Foster, *Before the Muses*, 1:484–85 (III.24); Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (2d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951), 141–43; and the excellent study by Theodore J. Lewis, "CT 13.33–34 and Ezekiel 32: Lion-Dragon Myths," *JAOS* 116 (1996): 28–47.

⁷⁶ MUŠ[*ba-aš-ma*] in obv. line 5 and 6 (Lewis, "CT 13.33–34," 31).

⁷⁷ Lewis translates *labbu* here as "raging dragon," comparing Akkadian *lab%bu* ("CT 13.33–34," 34).

⁷⁸ Heidel, *Babylonian Genesis*, 141. So also Lewis, "CT 13.33–34," 34. One might compare Saying 34 (line 117) in *Ahiqar*:

אריה לא [אין] תי בימא על כן יקראון לקפא לבא

"[There i]s no lion in the sea, therefore the sea-snake is called *labbu*."

See Lindenberger, *Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 105, for the uncertain characters and the translation (altered slightly here by the addition of brackets). See further, 105–107 and idem, in *OTP* 2:502 for a discussion of how Saying 34 turns on an Aramaic-Akkadian word play (cf. also *Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 20 and *OTP* 2:502 n. i for the possibility that the saying originated in Mesopotamia; cf. *DNWSI* 1:562). Lindenberger follows J. J. M. Roberts (*The Earliest Semitic Pantheon: A Study of the Semitic Deities Attested in Mesopotamia before Ur III* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972], 116 n. 444) in relating the *labbu* of the Akkadian myth to "an original *parras* form of the root *lawûm* 'to encircle' (**lawwayum* > **lawwûm* > *labbu*). Thus it means approximately 'the twisting one,' and is cognate with Ug[aritic] *ltn* and OT Leviathan" (*Aramaic Proverbs*, 106).

⁷⁹ Lewis, "CT 13.33–34," 30 (obv. line 20); contrast Heidel, *Babylonian Creation*, 142.

⁸⁰ Rev. line 8: 3 MU.MEŠ 3 ITI.MEŠ UD.1.KAM ù MI.1.[KAM]; Lewis, "CT 13.33–34," 32. Cf. Foster, *Before the Muses*, 1:485.

Mulki-rj-š-lemutti”⁸¹ (cf. **fig. 4.75**). Note also the lion-humanoid (*uridimmu*?) in Kassite, Neo-Assyrian (**fig. 4.76**), and later Seleucid art. This latter figure was apparently a minor deity, sometimes associated with Shamash, who also played a protective role.⁸² The same may hold true even for the *ugallu* (see, e.g., **fig. 4.77**), who, at least in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, was “a beneficent demon protective against evil demons and illnesses.”⁸³ In the Old Babylonian period, however, the *ugallu* seems to have been associated with Nergal (see, e.g., **fig. 4.78**).⁸⁴ “It has been suggested therefore that at this early time he represents an attendant of Nergal, and is a bringer of disease.”⁸⁵ This destructive aspect of the *ugallu* seems to be at work in the *Enuma Elish*, where he is one of the enemies Marduk must face.⁸⁶ Whatever the case, malicious demonic forces had to be contained somehow, either by incantations such as that found at Ugarit,⁸⁷ which suggest “that sinister gods resemble wild animals” like the lion,⁸⁸ or by the use of amulets, sometimes shaped like a lion (see, e.g., **fig. 4.79**). Indeed, some of the items discussed earlier may well have played an apotropaic function.⁸⁹

⁸¹ Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 119. See also Green, “The Lion-Demon,” 153.

⁸² Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 122.

⁸³ Ibid., 121. See further Green, “The Lion-Demon,” *passim*, especially 156, 164-65. Note also 153-55 for the inscription on two clay foundation figurines confirming the identification of such figures as *ugallu*: *mu-tir GAB lim-ni u a-a-[b]*; *mu-tir GAB lim-nu u a-a-[b]* (“Averter of the breast of the evil one and the enemy”; *ibid.*, 154).

⁸⁴ Green, “The Lion-Demon,” 160-62. Šamaš is also mentioned in an inscription accompanying one of the lion-demons, however (*ibid.*, 161).

⁸⁵ Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 121; cf. Green, “The Lion-Demon,” 152-53.

⁸⁶ *Enuma Elish* I:122; II:28; III:32, 90; see Lewis, “CT 13.33-34,” 37.

⁸⁷ *KTU* 1.169 (= *RIH* 78/20) line 4: *kylm.zrh.klbim.skh*, “May the sp[irit] of Baal expel you, may it expel you so that you come out at the voice of the exorcist, like smoke through a chimney, like a snake into a green tree, like goats to a summit, like lions to a lair” (line 4 = italic). The translation (of lines 1b-4) is that of N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilmilku and his Colleagues* (Biblical Seminar 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 443-45 (emphasis mine); see further there for additional notes. The *editio princeps* is P. Bordreuil and A. Caquot, “Les textes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découverts en 1978 à Ibn Hani,” *Syria* 57 (1980): 343-73; especially 346-47.

⁸⁸ Marjo Christina Annette Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (UBL 8; Münster: UGARIT-Verlag, 1990), 531.

⁸⁹ See John F. Nunn, *Ancient Egyptian Medicine* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), 110. André Parrot thinks that the lions decorating various jewelry items also played a protective function (see *Nineveh and Babylon* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1961], figs. 170C, 170E, 211, 251). See also Root, “Animals in the Art of Ancient Iran,” 199, for lion imagery on bronze pins from Hasanlu, which may have been “used by women as a symbolic mechanism for acquiring and signifying power in an environment of escalating anxiety about vulnerability to military incursions.” She is dependent on M. Marcus, “Dressed to Kill: Women and Pins in Early Iran,” *Oxford Art Journal* 17 (1994): 3-15.

But the lion as a trope of danger or threat writ large was not restricted only to composite beasts, even when that threat was specifically deleterious or malicious in tenor. As early as the Pyramid Texts, Horus states: “I am Horus who came forth from the acacia, who came forth from the acadia, to whom it was commanded: ‘Beware of the lion!’; to whom the command went forth: ‘Beware of the lion!’”⁹⁰ The vagueness of the concern over the lion in this text is exactly the point: one must beware of the lion *in general*; it poses a danger and problem that must be avoided at all costs. Othmar Keel has implied that it was this broad, general kind of danger that led artists to delineate the edge of the earth by lions (figs. 4.80–83).⁹¹ The dangerous nature of those regions is underscored, that is, by the presence of lions.

Indeed, lions and the leonine are dangerous *in almost any context*, as the omen texts clearly demonstrate. Many of these omens describe a lion that attacks a fold or a caravan, that prowls about killing people, or the like.⁹² Furthermore, if items—especially newly born young—look or act like lions in the *šumma izbu* series, it is often a bad omen. For example:

If a woman gives birth, and (the child) has the ear of a lion—there will be a harsh king in the land⁹³

or

[If] a ewe gives birth to a lion, and it has matted hair—reign of mourning; the land will be full of mourning; attack of an enemy.⁹⁴

For some Persian jewelry items with lions, see Helene J. Kantor, “Oriental Institute Museum Notes, No. 8: Achaemenid Jewelry in the Oriental Institute,” *JNES* 16 (1957): 1-23 and Pls. I-XI. Some have taken the animal that is swallowing a human figure on the first amulet from Arslan Tash (*ANEP*, 662) to be a lion (*NERT*, 247-48), though others have disagreed (*ANET*, 658).

⁹⁰ Pyr 436a-b (Utterance 294); see R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 88.

⁹¹ Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 25. For the gods associated with these regions/presentations, see below.

⁹² See *CAD* N/2, 194; *CAD* L, 24. Two notable texts should be mentioned given their close similarities to biblical passages: “if a lion kills a [...] but does not eat it” (*šumma* UR.MAœ [...] *id-kma la škul*; *CAD* N/2, 194, citing *CT* 40 42 K.2259+:12) and “a lion will kill someone who leaves the city gate” (*w%fi abullim ne-šum idāk*; *CAD* N/2, 194, citing *YOS* 10 26 ii 32). The former can be compared to 1 Kings 13 (especially v. 28); the latter with Isa 15:9 and Jer 5:6.

⁹³ BE SAL U.TU-*ma* GEŠTU UR.MAœ GAR LUGAL KALAG.GA *ina* KUR.GAL-*ši* (*Šumma Izbu* III 1); Erle Leichty, *The Omen Series Šumma Izbu* (TCS 4; Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin, 1970), 53.

⁹⁴ [BE] U₈ UR.MAœ Û.TU-*ma* *ma-li-i na-ši* BAL *ma-li-i* KUR *ma-la-a i-na-áš-ši* ZI [KÚR] (*Šumma Izbu* V 39); Leichty, *The Omen Series*, 77. It would be inaccurate to think that every leonine item had negative implications; see Tablet V of the series (Leichty, *The Omen Series*, 73-83). Additionally, connections between the “lion” that a ewe gives birth to (UR.MAœ here must be metaphorically descriptive) and the prince/king should not go unnoticed. E.g.: “[If a ewe gives birth to a lion—the weapons (which were) abandoned will be raised;] the king will have no opponent” ([BE] U₈ UR.MAœ Û.TU

Such sentiments are not restricted only to *šumma izbu*; they are found in other omen-ous texts as well.⁹⁵ It is clear from all this evidence, textual and otherwise, that the motif of the lion as threat *par excellence* lent force to, and perhaps even directly led to, the use of the lion as a metaphor for the wicked.

4.2.4. Lions and the Wicked

The use of the lion as an image for the wicked is most easily traced in textual sources since it is not always clear who or what the lion represents (if anyone or anything specific beyond the lion itself) in iconographical sources. The wicked-as-lion metaphor is attested in a number of different texts and in a manner not unlike its use in the Psalms.⁹⁶ It occurs with at least two referents. The first is *the general, unspecified wicked person*, and can be found in the Babylonian Theodicy. There the “Sufferer” describes the wicked as “[t]he savage lion who devoured the choicest flesh”⁹⁷ and who did not bring offerings to the goddess.⁹⁸ The response from the “Friend” continues the metaphor: “Come, consider the lion that you mentioned, the enemy of cattle. For the crime which the lion committed the pit awaits him.”⁹⁹ The last line provides some general insight into the hunting and detainment of lions in antiquity and may have impacted subsequent literature.¹⁰⁰ Be that as it may, the Sufferer is not convinced by the Friend. In a later speech, the Sufferer looks for proof that the god takes care of things “but the evidence is contrary.”¹⁰¹ As an example, the Sufferer highlights “[t]he first-born son [who] pursues his way like a lion.”¹⁰² The lion’s crime in these passages is well summarized by J. J. M.

GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ ŠUB.MEŠ ZI.MEŠ] LUGAL GABA.RI NU TUK-šī Šumma Izbu V 1; Leichty, *The Omen Series*, 73). “If a ewe gives birth to a lion, and it has no head—death of the prince” (BE U₈ UR.MA₆ Û.TU-*ma* SAG.DU-*su* NU GÁL *mu-ut* NUN; Šumma Izbu V 65; Leichty, *The Omen Series*, 79). “If an anomaly has the head of a lion—the prince will seize universal kingship” (BE *iz-bu* SAG.DU UR.MA₆ GAR NUN LUGAL-*tam* kiš-*šu-tam* DIB-*bat*, Šumma Izbu VII 1; Leichty, *The Omen Series*, 91). “[If] an anomaly has the teeth of a lion—the prince will grow strong, and [...] his land” ([BE] *iz-bu* ZÜ.MEŠ UR.MA₆ GAR NUN *i-dan-nin-ma* KUR-*su* [...]; Šumma Izbu VII 66’; Leichty, *The Omen Series*, 95). See also CAD N/2, 195. For more on the lion and the king, see further §4.3 below.

⁹⁵ See CAD N/2, 195 and Parpola, *Letters*, 100 (#120 r. 2-3).

⁹⁶ See J. J. M. Roberts, “The Young Lions of Psalm 34,11,” *Bib* 54 (1973): 265-67. The present section is much indebted to Roberts’ article. See also Chapter 2 (§2.3.2).

⁹⁷ *ag-gu la-bu šā i-tak-ka-lu du-muq ši-r[i]*; BWL, 74:50 (75:50 for the translation).

⁹⁸ BWL, 74:51. Line 52 describes them as the “nouveau riche” (*b₂/pa-an*). For the wicked lion as one who does not bring offerings, see further below.

⁹⁹ *gi-ir bu-li la-ba šā taj-su-su ga-na bit-ru gi-il-lat* UR.MA₆ *i-pu-šu pi-ta-as-su ; aš-tum*; BWL, 74:61-62 (75:61-62 for the translation; cf. also NERT, 134-35). The first half of this line has been treated above.

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., ARMT 14 2.5-17 and further below (this section and §4.3.1.2).

¹⁰¹ See BWL, 85:243.

¹⁰² *i-lak-kid lab-biṣ ra-bi a-j i ū-ru-uj-šu*, BWL, 84:247 (85:247 for the translation; cf. also NERT, 136).

Roberts: it is “the self-assertive autonomy with which he acts. He commits the religious sin of ignoring the gods, of trusting in himself rather than in the gods.”¹⁰³

One notes in passing that this judgment not only highlights the problematic activity of the wicked, it also demonstrates one of the reasons why the lion metaphor works well for deities—namely, because they *can* trust in themselves. Moreover, the gods are often able to protect one against such lions—a motif discussed in greater detail below (§§4.4.1–4.4.2)—as, for instance, in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* (the “Poem of the Righteous Sufferer”), which describes the wicked person as a lion (*girru*) who was devouring the sufferer until Marduk put a bit into its mouth.¹⁰⁴

The underling problem of “self-assertive autonomy” is also found in the second referent of the wicked-as-lion metaphor: *the king*. A prominent example is found in the Kutha (or Cuthaeen) legend of Naram-Sin, which attributes the following statement to the king:

What lion (ever) observed oracles? What wolf (ever) consulted a dream-priestess?
I will go like a robber according to my own inclination.¹⁰⁵

This type of metaphorical use of the lion as a wicked person or proud enemy is also attested more broadly of the *royal court* in a Neo-Assyrian letter, apparently written by an exorcist named Urad-Gula to Ashurbanipal.¹⁰⁶ Urad-Gula was employed by Esarhaddon but was evidently dismissed by Ashurbanipal.¹⁰⁷ In the letter, Urad-Gula explains his forlorn situation and asks for financial assistance from the king; in so doing, he seems to describe the royal court as a den or pit of lions. The pertinent lines are, unfortunately, broken:

(Obv.) 39 “[...] Day and night I pray to the king in front of the lion’s pit
40 [...which...] are not ... with morsels

¹⁰³ Roberts, “The Young Lions,” 266.

¹⁰⁴ *i-na pi-i gir-ra KÙ-ia id-di nap-sa-ma^d marduk*; *BWL*, 56 (K3291 [G] rev. line q). The commentary on the line reads: *gir-ra*: UR.MAœ (*BWL*, 56). Note that *gir-ri* also occurs elsewhere in *Ludlul* though in a broken context (*BWL*, 58:13). Hence, it is not entirely clear if it refers to Marduk or to the speaker’s enemy. Lambert dates the composition to the Kassite period (*ibid.*, 26). Karel van der Toorn, “In the Lions’ Den: The Babylonian Background of a Biblical Motif,” *CBQ* 60 (1998): 633, dates the piece to the 12th century (see also 636 n. 28).

¹⁰⁵ *a-a-ū nē-šu bi-ri ib-ri a-a-ū barbaru iš-al šá-il-tu lul-lik ki-i m%r j ab-ba-ti^r ina[?] me-gir lib-bi-ya*; O. R. Gurney, “The Sultantepe Tablets (Continued): IV. The Cuthaeen Legend of Naram-Sin,” *Anatolian Studies* 5 (1955): 102–103, lines 80–82.

¹⁰⁶ For a thorough study, see Simo Parpola, “The Forlorn Scholar,” in *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to Erica Reiner* (ed. Francesca Rochberg-Halton; AOS 67; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1987), 257–78. Parpola dates the letter to sometime after 666. Note also van der Toorn, “In the Lion’s Den,” 626–40, especially 629–37 (cf. also Chapter 2, §2.2.4.1).

¹⁰⁷ For Urad-Gula’s career, see Parpola, “The Forlorn Scholar,” 269–71; van der Toorn, “In the Lion’s Den,” 630–33.

41 [...] my heart amidst my colleagues [...] ¹⁰⁸

Obviously this text bears some resemblance to the biblical story of Daniel—a point that van der Toorn has developed.¹⁰⁹ But, quite apart from any biblical connections, the text illustrates the metaphorical use of the lion as a trope for the wicked. In this case, Urad-Gula—who was once popular in the court, who at one time “ate the lion’s morsels”¹¹⁰—is now on the outside, disregarded and ignored, little more than a laughingstock. In recounting his plight he employed the “pit of lions” as a “metaphor for the hostility and competition among the scholars at court.”¹¹¹

It is perfectly understandable that, upon facing such lions—be they real, composite, or at one’s place of employment (!)—one would want protection from the threat posed by such creatures. It is appropriate at this point, therefore, to turn to the main figures that were able to provide such help: the monarch/mighty person and the deity (along with the accompanying motifs of the lion considered *alongside* and *as* such personages). The former is treated first.

4.3. THE LION AS MONARCH/MIGHTY ONE AND VICTOR

The monarch or mighty person¹¹² as the last, and indeed only, stand against the ferocious lion is a very early motif,¹¹³ as was seen in the Warka stela and the many contest scenes already discussed. While the anthropomorphic figure in the contest scenes may well be divine, there can be no doubt that the image, regardless, left its mark on subsequent presentations, including those where the figure is definitely human—as, for instance, in the use of the contest scene in Persian glyptic. As for the notion of the lion as victor, this has also already

¹⁰⁸ Parpola, *Letters*, 232 transcribes as follows:

39 [x x x x x UD]-mu ù MI ina IGI¹ gab-*bi* ša UR.MAœ LUGAL¹ u¹-*pa*-[/a]

40 [x x x x x x x x x x]x-ni ina ŠĀ u-ka-la-a-ti la sa-am-mu-ù-n[¹ x]

41 [x x x x x x x]x ŠĀ¹-bi bir-ti mi-i-j-ri-¹ia¹.

This differs somewhat from his earlier edition (“The Forlorn Scholar,” 262-63). Cf. also van der Toorn, “In the Lion’s Den,” 632.

¹⁰⁹ See van der Toorn, “In the Lion’s Den,” *passim*; see also Chapter 2 (§2.2.4.1). Note further Parpola, “The Forlorn Scholar,” 274; and 276 on *gab-bu*. “As far as I can see, otherwise not attested in Akkadian....Here possibly an Aramaic loan-word.”

¹¹⁰ Obv. lines 22b-23a: “I ate the morsels of the lion, I appeased your god” (*a-kil¹ u-ka-la-a-ti ša UR.MAœ at-ta-ad-gil DINGIR-ka¹*; Parpola, *Letters*, 232, again differing from “The Forlorn Scholar,” 260-61; cf. also van der Toorn, “In the Lion’s Den,” 632). It may be that in this case, the lion serves as a metaphor for the king (that is, Urad-Gula eats food in the course of his *royal service*) or for the gods (cf. obv. line 19 where Urad-Gula says that he used to receive “leftovers” [*re-j a-a-ti*] from the offerings).

¹¹¹ Van der Toorn, “In the Lion’s Den,” 627. See further 633-37 for connections with the plot (and lion metaphor) of *Ludlul*.

¹¹² For the linking of the monarch and mighty one in ancient Egypt, see Donald Redford, “The Concept of Kingship during the Eighteenth Dynasty,” in *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (ed. David O’Connor and David P. Silverman; PdÄ 9; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 157-84.

¹¹³ Perhaps as early as 5000. See Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 219.

been shown to underlie the many and various depictions that highlight the lion's predatory dominance. Indeed, the power and success of the lion in the hunt seems to have led to two different, yet related, developments in its use as a figure in royal ideology. The first of these continued to treat the lion as primarily a threat—one that had to be combated and defeated. Here, at least for the human realm, the monarch or mighty one is the great protector against and fighter of the lion and all it represents; hence, in this constellation we find “the motif of the power of the king over the powers of chaos.”¹¹⁴ The second development, however, treated the lion in a more appreciative way: By appropriating the lion's ferocity, the monarch or mighty one *became* the lion, using the animal as a representation of royalty and power itself. This latter use is also very early if the lion on the Predynastic Lion/Battlefield Palette (**fig. 4.84**) represents the king, as many assume.¹¹⁵ It seems impossible to decide which of these two developments is chronologically anterior, though they are clearly related.¹¹⁶ Perhaps it is simplest and best to posit that they arose concurrently or nearly so. As both are attested at approximately the same time, any sort of “development” proper would have to be placed still earlier—sometime in the fourth millennium, if not before. Be that as it may, the motif of the monarch/mighty one in battle with the lion will be treated first.

4.3.1. *The Monarch/Mighty One Versus the Lion*

As the Warka stela demonstrates, the lion as the enemy of the monarch is a very early motif in Mesopotamia and the same can be said for other parts of the ancient Near East. Some examples from outside Mesopotamia may nevertheless be dependent on Mesopotamian items. Such is probably the case for the Gebel el-Arak knife handle (**fig. 4.85**), which portrays a priest-king figure controlling two lions. It is generally agreed that this depiction is derived from Mesopotamian prototypes though the exact signification may be different in the Egyptian context.¹¹⁷ The knife itself may have served a ritual function related to the notion of kingship,¹¹⁸ but, regardless of its exact function, the

¹¹⁴ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 57.

¹¹⁵ See, e.g., Irmgard Woldering, *The Art of Egypt: The Time of the Pharaohs* (Art of the World; New York: Greystone, 1963), 50; Cyril Aldred, *The Egyptians* (rev. and enlarged ed.; London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 43; Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 103.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 58.

¹¹⁷ See Holly Pittman, “Constructing Context: The Gebel el-Arak Knife: Greater Mesopotamian and Egyptian Interaction in the Late Fourth Millennium B.C.E.,” in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference* (ed. Jerrold S. Cooper and Glenn M. Schwartz; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 9-32; and Parrot, *Sumer*, 80. Note more generally Allyn L. Kelley, “A Review of the Evidence Concerning Early Egyptian Ivory Knife Handles,” in *Egyptological Miscellanies: A Tribute to Professor Ronald J. Williams* (ed. J. K. Hoffmeier and E. S. Meltzer) = *The Ancient World* 6 (1983): 95-102, especially 100.

¹¹⁸ See Pittman, “Constructing Context,” 27; and Kelley, “A Review,” 97.

handle highlights a conception of the monarch/mighty one as one who contends with and further dominates and controls lions.¹¹⁹ Such *contention* and *domination* can be expressed in various ways and can be categorized broadly into two groups: 1) images where the monarch/mighty one *encounters and fights* lions; and 2) images where this figure actually *hunts and kills* them.

4.3.1.1. Images of Encounter and Control. An early Egyptian example of this theme is found in the famous painted tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis (**fig. 4.86**). This and the Gebel el-Arak piece immediately recall Mesopotamian contest scene glyptic as well as pieces in the round—for instance, the so-called “Gilgamesh” figures portrayed on objects from Tell Agrab who master lions in various ways (e.g., **figs. 4.87–88**). Calling such figures “Gilgamesh,” however, is problematic and lacks any sort of inscriptional support. As was the case with the contest scenes, it may well be the case that the figure in these presentations is a deity and that the conflict between him and the lions is symbolic, referring to broader issues than *human* heroism and kingship. Even so, as already stated, the domination of the lion in such fashion continues into much later times, and it is often clear in these later periods that the figure in question is a human king, though it must be admitted that the more generic hero also continues into the later periods as does the divine dominator-of-lions figure. What is perhaps most striking about these depictions is the relative ease with which the figure in question dominates the lions. The animals are often rampant, portrayed heraldically on both sides of the central human figure who seems to hold them up or hold them back with the strength of his arms alone, as he grasps the lions by their manes, chins (beards?), or tails (when inverted). It is obvious, then, that if this figure is not divine, he is nevertheless imbued with superhuman strength. In a context of kingship, such a depiction underscores the *supernatural power* of the king and the strong similarities the monarch bears to the divine realm—that is, his *divine* or, at least, *semi-divine* prowess.¹²⁰

There are other images of the monarch or mighty one encountering the lion, however, where the scene is much less static and controlled. In these, the encounter is much more violent, with the hero figure holding a weapon of some sort with the intent of protecting someone or something from the lion or with the intent simply to meet its aggression with equal or greater force. Here, too,

¹¹⁹ See Kelley, “A Review,” 100, for further examples of the same motif on other Egyptian objects.

¹²⁰ Note Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 58: “The purpose of the attack on the lion was not only to destroy the lion for the sake of destruction, but to secure his mastery over the animals....The hero/king thereby emphasizes his supremacy over all animals, both domesticated and wild.” Cornelius thinks that this motif later fossilized, as in the relief of the hero from Sargon II’s palace at Khorsabad (**fig. 4.89**). Many scholars state that this figure holds “a smaller lion” (*ibid.*, 58) or a “lion cub” (so Henrietta McCall, *Mesopotamian Myths* [The Legendary Past; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990], 77). But this is not really a smaller lion (note the full mane) so much as a giant hero!

the contest scenes treated earlier come to mind and are not unrelated. A later, ninth-century example of the motif is found on an ivory box in Syrian style from the southeast (burnt) palace at Nimrud (**fig. 4.90**) where a lion attacks a human while another human approaches in a chariot with a dog from the right, presumably to provide some relief. While it is difficult to say how much this scene is intended to highlight the action of the human actant *vis-à-vis* the terror of the lion, other pieces are clearer and more symbolic in this regard. So, for example, Tutankhamun (1336–1327) grasps two lions by their tails and prepares to strike them in the standard smiting pose that symbolizes royal dominance and power (**fig. 4.91**). The same posture is found in the earlier plaque from Thutmose II (1492–1479) (**fig. 4.92**). That such scenes are representative of larger royal thematics is demonstrated in the plaque depicting Ramesses III (1184–1153) about to slay an Asiatic enemy who is depicted as a human-headed lion “held upside down by its tail in a manner reminiscent of Assyro-Babylonian seals and reliefs.”¹²¹ Later examples, such as a Phoenician scarab from Sardinia, seem to represent a fossilization of the motif (**fig. 4.93**). In this regard, a small seal from Dynasty 25 or 26 (8th–6th century) is instructive as it apparently presents the pharaoh in his cultic run with a lion between his legs (**fig. 4.94**).¹²² The lion here may represent a vanquished foe as a prone human figure in the same position appears on another scarab with similar composition.¹²³

Literary remains also contain references to the conflict between lions and royal/heroic types. The Pennsylvania tablet of Gilgamesh recounts how Enkidu “put on a garment, became like a warrior...took up his weapon to do battle with lions,” and, how “[w]hen at night, asleep, the shepherds lay down, he struck down wolves, he chased off lions.”¹²⁴ Gilgamesh himself also participated in the act of killing lions in the mountain passes.¹²⁵ These Mesopotamian exemplars find their reflexes in later kings, especially in the Neo-Assyrian empire, as was already noted in the case of Ashurbanipal. The lion’s prominent place in Neo-Assyrian royal propaganda will be taken up in

¹²¹ See Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 2:370.

¹²² See André Wiese, *Zum Bild des Königs auf ägyptischen Siegelamuletten* (OBO 96; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1990), 124 for the date. It is inscribed with the name Thutmose (III; 1479–1425).

¹²³ See *ibid.*, Abb. 148. Note Rühlmann, “Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild,” Taf. Ir, u-w for examples with the lion between the feet of the king who smites his enemy. In these images the lion is probably an assistant or familiar of some sort.

¹²⁴ The translation is that of George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 105 (P 110–115). Gilgamesh P probably dates to the 18th century (*ibid.*, 101). See also CAD L, 24 and cf. Gilgamesh’s statement to Enkidu in the Yale tablet (also Old Babylonian in provenance): “You were born and grew up in the wild, a lion attacked you, you experienced all” (George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 110; Y 151–152).

¹²⁵ [*ina né-re-be-e-ti*] *šá* KUR-*i ta-duk* UR.MA₆.MEŠ: “You [Gilgamesh] killed lions [in] the mountain [passes]” (Gilg X.39); Parpola, *The Standard Babylonian Epic*, 103; cf. also CAD N/2, 195; and George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 77. Note also Gilg X.35, 59.

further detail below under the lion hunt proper (§4.3.1.2), but it is important to note that Ashurbanipal is not alone in recounting his triumphs over lions. Ashurnasirpal II (883–859), who was also fascinated with the lion hunt, also bragged of capturing lions, keeping them in captivity, and even breeding them.¹²⁶ Much, perhaps most, of this type of braggadocio is the result of royal rhetoric and ideological propaganda—at least in presentation, whatever the precise zoological details may be. Even so, such texts do provide evidence of the existence and distribution of the lion at these periods. There are also several Middle Assyrian texts that list rations—usually sheep—that were (to be) provided to lions kept in the royal zoos.¹²⁷

Keeping lions in captivity, even domesticating some of them, requires further discussion. But first it should be noted that it is not only the mythic heroes and kings of Mesopotamian epic or the Neo-Assyrian kings of the Iron Age that boasted of capturing lions or that thought of such an activity as a royal duty. The same motif is found in the Instruction of King Amenemhet I (1963–1934), which purports to be this king’s advice to his son, Seostris I (1943–1898), but which was, in fact, probably commissioned by the latter during his reign.¹²⁸ In recounting his good deeds, Amenemhet I states:

None hungered in my years,
 None...thirsted in them.
 One sat because I acted and spoke of me,
 I had assigned everything to its place.
 I subdued lions, I captured crocodiles,
 I repressed those of Wawat,
 I captured the Medjai,
 I made the Asiatics do the dog walk.¹²⁹

This passage is telling because the subjugation of lions appears as one example in a larger list describing the king’s power and ordering of his kingdom. The lion, that is, along with the crocodile—another paradigmatically ominous animal in Egyptian thought—is roughly equivalent to foreign peoples (Wawat, Medjai, Asiatics): subduing one is very much like subduing the other.

¹²⁶ “With my outstretched hand and my fierce heart I captured 15 strong lions from the mountains and forests. I took away 50 lion cubs. I herded them into Calah and the palaces of my land into cages. I bred their cubs in great numbers”: DÜ-šī-na ū-šab-ri ina ti-ri-*ni* ŠU-ia ū šu-uš-mur ŠA-ia 15 UR.MAœ.MEŠ KAL.MEŠ TA KUR.MEŠ-e ū GIŠ.TIR.MEŠ ina ŠU-te DIB-bat 50 mu-ra-ni UR.MAœ.MEŠ lu āš-šā-a ina URU kal-j i ū É.GAL.MEŠ KUR-ia ina É e-sir lu ad-di-šū-nu mu-ra-ni-šū-nu a-na ma-aš-diš ū-šā-li-dī ; RIMA 2:226 (A.0.101.2) lines 32–35; cf. *ARI*, 2:149 (§598). See further RIMA 2:226 lines 36–38a and *CAD* N/2, 195.

¹²⁷ See *CAD* N/2, 195.

¹²⁸ See *AEI*, 1:135; *LAE*, 193; *ANET*, 418. Most of the manuscripts are from the New Kingdom (*ANET*, 418). Lichtheim’s translation (below) follows a copy from Dynasty 18.

¹²⁹ *AEI*, 1:137; cf. *ANET*, 419; *LAE*, 196; Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians*, 74; and *ARE*, 1:232 (§483).

This parallelism highlights the close, virtually identical, relationship that exists between hunt and war.¹³⁰ This relationship is already at work in many of the pieces presented earlier and is also present to a large degree in the royal lion hunt discussed in the next section. It is also at work at some level in the curious (and yet perhaps predicable) motif of keeping the lion as a pet or having the lion as a hunting companion or fellow warrior.

The keeping of lions in captivity may be quite ancient indeed, if the seven partial lion skeletons from the grave complex of Aha (Dynasty 1; early third millennium) at Umm el-Qaab are actually young lions, “suggesting...that they might have been kept in captivity.”¹³¹ Remains like these may be more cultic than militaristic, however, and the same holds true for the skeletons of a panther and a young lion found in the foundation of the White Temple on the summit of the Anu ziggurat, where they “apparently [served] as a foundation offering.”¹³² A cylinder seal from Ur III may depict just such a ritual (**fig. 4.95**; note the lack of paws on the feline).¹³³

Oppenheim stated that Mesopotamian “[k]ings kept lions in cages or pits from the Ur III period on,” but unfortunately cited no specific texts in support of this.¹³⁴ Van Buren argued on the basis of paintings at Til Barsip that the earliest example of a tame lion in Mesopotamia dates to the time of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727) or, perhaps, Adad-narari III (810–783).¹³⁵ In Egypt, however, the tame lion in connection with the king is attested much earlier.

In addition to the lion skeletons from Umm el-Qaab, Hayes has posited that the “ornate collar worn by the ivory lioness” that seems to be a game piece from the Early Dynastic period, “may indicate that the animal was tame, possibly a pet,” though he allows that the collar could be purely decorative.¹³⁶ Constant de Wit, however, is convinced that these objects, and many others—for example, the lions depicted alongside thrones—do, in fact, represent domesticated lions.¹³⁷

There are a number of presentations that clearly depict the lion as the king’s familiar. Tutankhamun, for instance, hunts while seated, with a small,

¹³⁰ See Othmar Keel, “Der Bogen als Herrschaftssymbol: Einige unveröffentlichte Skarabäen aus Ägypten und Israel unter Thema ‘Jagd und Krieg,’” in Othmar Keel, Menakhem Shuval, and Christoph Uehlinger, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel*, Volume 3: *Die Frühe Eisenzeit: Ein Workshop* (OBO 100; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1990), 27–65. Note also Keel’s “Nachträge” in *Studien III*, 263–79.

¹³¹ Paula Wapnish, “Lions,” in *OEANE* 3:362. See also John Baines, “Origins of Egyptian Kingship,” in *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, 113.

¹³² Van Buren, *Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 9–10; citation from 10.

¹³³ So Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 71, who appropriately compares the Urkish foundation deposit (*ibid.* 171 n. 14). For the latter, see below.

¹³⁴ Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 46; see also 351 n. 13b. One might compare the practice of hunting with pits (*bu-û-ri*; e.g., Gilg I.113, 140).

¹³⁵ Van Buren, *Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 8–9; cf. Reade in *Art and Empire*, 83.

¹³⁶ Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 1:45 and fig. 35.

¹³⁷ See de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 10–15 and the items cited there.

presumably tame, lion by his side (**fig. 4.96**). His chair also has lion feet, which further underscores the similarity of the king to his leonine companion.¹³⁸ A conceptually-related depiction is found in the tomb of Huy, where Syrians are shown bringing a lion on a leash as part of their tribute to Tutankhamun (**fig. 4.97**). The same motif is found in fifth-century Persepolis, on the Apadana reliefs, where the Elamite delegation (upper register) brings lions to the king (**fig. 4.98**).¹³⁹ Lions are among those gifts fit for a king!

In Egypt, it is with the Ramesside kings that the lion as royal companion and pet makes its strongest appearance.¹⁴⁰ In the reliefs depicting Ramesses II's (1279–1213) battle at Kadesh, a lion is twice depicted within the camp (**figs. 4.99–100**).¹⁴¹ In other reliefs of the same battle, the pharaoh rides a chariot decorated with a lion that springs forward and seems to grasp a human (Asiatic?) head in its jaws (**fig. 4.101**). This latter motif is also found on the boats of Ramesses III in his reliefs at Medinet Habu (**fig. 4.102**). In both cases, the motif is decorative,¹⁴² though it conveys a martial message and is at least partially related to the companion-lion notion.

Ramesses II had similar depictions elsewhere, for instance at the Abu Simbel temple, where a lion accompanies his horses and chariots, or at the Bet el-Walli Temple where the same tableau is found.¹⁴³ In the latter locale, the pharaoh also receives a lion as part of the tribute brought from a Nubian contingent.

As already seen in the ships on the Medinet Habu reliefs, Ramesses III continues the use of the lion that is found in his namesake. The third Ramesses is frequently accompanied by a lion, especially when attacking an enemy (see **fig. 4.103**). This image is also from the Medinet Habu reliefs, where similar presentations are found; indeed, this motif is rather popular on these reliefs.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ See Keel in *Studien III*, 273, who cites Rühlmann, “Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild,” (note especially 652 and Taf. Is-t, y-z; cf. also Chapter 3, e.g., **figs. 3.67–71**) and de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 10–15.

¹³⁹ See Peter Calmeyer, “The Persian King in the Lion’s Den,” *Iraq* 45 (1983): 138–39 for the possibility that these might be tame lions from an Elamite sanctuary, said to hold such creatures by Aelian (*On the Characteristics of Animals*, 12.23).

¹⁴⁰ Patrick F. Houlihan, “Animals in Egyptian Art and Hieroglyphs,” in Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World*, 121: “the practice of keeping lions as palace pets...can be traced from the beginning of the First Dynasty through the New Kingdom and beyond.”

¹⁴¹ One of Ramesses II’s favorite pet lions was named “Slayer of his Enemies” (Houlihan, “Animals in Egyptian Art,” 121).

¹⁴² So, rightly, Othmar Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen im Alten Testament: Ikonographische Studien zu Jos 8, 18–26; Ex 17, 8–13; 2 Kön 13, 14–19 und 1 Kön 22, 11* (OBO 5; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1974), 79; *contra* Schweitzer, *Löwe und Sphinx*, 51.

¹⁴³ See *ARE*, 3:196 (§449) and 201 (§470), respectively.

¹⁴⁴ See *ARE*, 4:27 (§49), 28–29 (§51) (and the accompanying inscription where Ramesses III is described as “the strong-armed son of Amon [who] is behind them [i.e., the enemy] like a young lion”), 67 (§113), and 71 (§122), for description and discussion of the

But not only there.¹⁴⁵ Whether such reliefs—often with accompanying inscriptions describing the king as a lion (see further below)—“prove” that Ramesses II and Ramesses III each “possessed a tame lion which not only accompanied them into battle, but also attacked the enemy”¹⁴⁶ is debatable, though de Wit has collected some texts that speak of training lions,¹⁴⁷ and additional supporting evidence might be summoned.¹⁴⁸ Despite all that, the inscriptions that liken the pharaoh to a lion could be taken to underscore the *representational* nature of the lion figures here. Whatever the case, it is without question that this type of presentation continued to have a long life, occurring as late as the first-century lion temple at Naga where the Meroitic king Amanitere and queen Netekamani smite the heads of their enemies while accompanying lions attack simultaenously (**fig. 4.105**).¹⁴⁹ Another notable example, this one from Dynasty 20, is a statue of Ramesses VI (1143–1136) where the lion strides by the pharaoh between him and a bound Libyan whom

Medinet Habu reliefs. In each case, the context is militaristic and the pharaoh drives enemy peoples or captives (Libyans or Syrians) before him.

¹⁴⁵ See Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 2:369 fig. 233 for an unfinished sketch of a pharaoh smiting enemies with a lion assisting. The attribution of the piece to Ramesses III is probable, though not certain (*ibid.*, 2:369–70).

¹⁴⁶ So E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (2 vols.; New York: Dover, 1969), 2:362.

¹⁴⁷ De Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 10–11.

¹⁴⁸ E.g., the relief of two lions mating from the tomb of Ukh-hotep at Meir, ca. 1920, which implies close observation of the lion (**fig. 4.104**). One might also compare what Hayes has called the “deft and knowing treatment of the structure and musculature of the lion’s powerful body” (*Scepter of Egypt*, 2:93) by some artists in some periods, which also implies close, first-hand knowledge, though that knowledge could have been gained from dead, non-domesticated specimens. In this connection, note Van Buren, who thinks that following the first dynasty of Babylon the lion was increasingly less encountered in Mesopotamia. “Consequently the lion, which in archaic times was delineated with the greatest realism, was more and more schematically rendered as it became increasingly rarely seen, and it was not until the days of the royal hunting expeditions of Assyrian monarchs that artists once more drew a lion from close observations of the characteristics and habits of the living beast” (*Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 3). While interesting, Van Buren’s scenario remains speculative and some of the texts discussed in this chapter indicate close encounters with the lion regardless of the artistic conventions of the period(s) in question.

¹⁴⁹ See Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 59; Rühlmann, “Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild,” 654; and W. Steven Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (2d ed. rev. with additions by William Kelly Simpson; Pelican History of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 424 and fig. 418. See also the monumental relief, Greco-Roman in provenance, from Kom Ombo, where the lion at the pharaoh’s feet grasps in its mouth the cord that binds the captives (Schweitzer, *Löwe und Sphinx*, Taf. XII, 6). Note also Diodorus Siculus’ comments on the lion accompanying the Pharaoh in the Ramesseum (Book 1, 48; see de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 13–14).

the king drags along by the hair (**fig. 4.106**).¹⁵⁰ The lion's body crosses between the fugitive's legs with its tail curling around the latter of the two, thus underscoring that from top (head) to bottom (legs), this prisoner is mastered by the pharaoh and his leonine companion.

This last example shows that the accompanying lion is not restricted to monumental reliefs.¹⁵¹ Nor is it restricted to Egypt proper, as the Phoenician bowl, clearly Egyptianizing in style, from a tomb in Italy demonstrates (**fig. 4.107**). So, similarly, the bronze bowl from Nimrud (**fig. 4.108**) that may date to the 7th century. These pieces highlight the ability of smaller, non-monumental art to disseminate visual information and motifs from a particular locale or in a particular style over wide expanses, far from the home of their original development.¹⁵² It is tempting in that light to posit that Mesopotamian examples of the king with a tame lion might have been influenced by or even derived from Egyptian antecedents. Two factors mitigate against such a conclusion, however: the first is the early attestation of Mesopotamian monarchs capturing lions, already discussed above; the second is that the Mesopotamian examples—apart from items like the Nimrud bowl which are obviously imports¹⁵³—are of a rather different ilk than the Egyptian. Lacking in iconography native to Mesopotamia is any sort of lion that *accompanies* the monarch into battle. Instead, in Mesopotamia, the lion is frozen in the state of enemy—stereotypically so in the Neo-Assyrian royal seal impressions (e.g., **fig. 4.109**).¹⁵⁴ This seal type was “used by the Assyrian royal palace administration for three centuries,”¹⁵⁵ from the time of Shalmaneser III (858–824) through Aššur-etel-ilāni (ca. 631–627).¹⁵⁶ There is one possible exception

¹⁵⁰ See Cyril Aldred, *Egyptian Art in the Days of the Pharaohs 3100-320 BC* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 198 and 200, which mentions a similar piece in limestone which may have been the model for this one.

¹⁵¹ De Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 13 and n. 76.

¹⁵² See the discussion in Christoph Uehlinger, ed., *Images as Media: Sources for the Cultural History of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (1st millennium BCE)* (OBO 175; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 2000).

¹⁵³ See Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 324-25 on the Nimrud bowl and note also Pierre Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1980), fig. 109.

¹⁵⁴ See recently Irene J. Winter, “*Le Palais imaginaire: Scale and Meaning in the Iconography of Neo-Assyrian Cylinder Seals*,” in *Images as Media*, 51-87, especially 54-60, who has argued that a better term, given the probable use and users of this seal-type is “official state (or chancery) seal” (60).

¹⁵⁵ Collon in *Art and Empire*, 188.

¹⁵⁶ For an extensive study, see Herbordt, *Neuassyrische Glyptik*, 123-45 and Taf. 34-36. See also A. J. Sachs, “The Late Assyrian Royal-Seal Type,” *Iraq* 15 (1953): 167-70; Barbara Parker, “Seals and Seal Impressions from the Nimrud Excavations, 1955-58,” *Iraq* 24 (1962): 26-40 and Pls. IX-XXII, especially 38 and Pl. XXI, 1 (ND. 7080); A. R. Millard, “The Assyrian Royal Seal Type Again,” *Iraq* 27 (1965): 12-16; and idem, “Königssiegel,” *RLA* 6:136-37. Recently, Herbordt has argued that an uninscribed exemplar dates earlier, from Ashurnasirpal II (885-859). See her “Ein Königssiegel

to this judgment regarding the adversarial presentation of the lion in Neo-Assyrian iconography. It is the famous relief of the lions in the garden from the palace of Ashurbanipal (**fig. 4.110**). Whether this relief is intended to depict the king's zoological garden, his lion pets, or a holding area for the lions that he raised and kept for purposes of his royal hunt, is debated.¹⁵⁷ What is apparent in any event is that even in this relief—a most unique presentation of “peaceful” lions in the Neo-Assyrian period¹⁵⁸—the lions serve to reinforce the power of the king over the forces of chaos. He is, after all, able to *keep* these powerful and ferocious beasts. In sum, then, Cornelius seems correct in his assessment:

The lion was...a dangerous being which threatened man and beast and had to be conquered. It symbolized the powers of chaos and was feared. The lion, overcome and subdued by the king, was used as symbol of the power of the sovereign, becoming a *royal symbol* par excellence.¹⁵⁹

Nowhere is the king-vs.-lion motif as a royal symbol more pronounced or more powerful than in the lion hunt.

4.3.1.2. The Lion Hunt. Predynastic Egypt again demonstrates the extreme antiquity of this theme. In this case, it is the Hunter's Palette (**fig. 4.111**). As the several lions depicted here are hunted by a string of warriors, one of whom himself becomes a victim, the image is not distinctly royal. On this point too, then, the Warka stela may be the earliest instance of the monarch in the lion-hunt posture, though it was discussed earlier under the rubric of defense against the predation of the lion. Be that as it may, Egypt does have its share of royal lion hunts and it is worth noting that many of these are found in the New Kingdom.¹⁶⁰

Thutmose IV (1400–1390), for instance, is found hunting lions in the highlands of the Memphite nome.¹⁶¹ It is Thutmose IV's successor, Amenhotep III (1390–1352), however, who “issued scarabs with inscriptions commemorating the no doubt exaggerated numbers of lions and wild bulls he had killed in his first ten regnal years.”¹⁶² There are at least forty copies recording these

Assurnasirpals II. (?) aus Assur,” *BaghM* 27 (1996): 411-17; Winter, “*Le Palais imaginaire*,” 54.

¹⁵⁷ Julian Reade thinks that the lions in the garden are tame (*Assyrian Sculpture* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999], 72; idem in *Art and Empire*, 83), as does Van Buren, *Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 8. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 186 is uncertain; perhaps they were intended for the king's sport. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 152 states that they are “presumably drugged and docile.”

¹⁵⁸ Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 186 calls the relief “exceptional.”

¹⁵⁹ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 59 (emphasis his).

¹⁶⁰ See Aldred, *The Egyptians*, 156.

¹⁶¹ *ARE*, 2:322 (§813).

¹⁶² Baines, “Origins of Egyptian Kingship,” 113. Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:362 thinks lion hunting in Egypt improbable, positing that the lions Amenhotep III killed were from Mitanni. It seems easier, if Budge is correct about lion hunts in Egypt, to posit that

exploits; each ends with: “Statement of the lions which His Majesty brought (down) with his own arrows from Year 1 to Year 10: fierce lions, 102.”¹⁶³ Amenhotep III apparently bequeathed this legacy to his son, the otherwise self-consumed Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (1352–1336). A fragmentary relief from Amarna seems to show arrows or spears in the nose and mouth of a lion (**fig. 4.112**), presumably from the king’s lion hunt, though the fragmentary nature of the relief precludes interpretive certainty. Even the young and relatively insignificant Tutankhamun entered the lion-hunting business as **fig. 4.91** reveals. The image used there evokes the head-smiting scene so familiar from pharaonic iconography.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, both Tutankhamun’s lion-smiting and the head-smiting images are probably best understood as conceptually-related and linked images, functioning to represent in a general way the power and ability of the monarch to dominate and conquer all else.¹⁶⁵ This interpretation receives striking support by the presentation of both types of imagery on the selfsame object—again, from Tutankhamun’s tomb. On the chest found there are various panels showing the king hunting in his chariot; two are of particular interest (**figs. 4.113–114**). On them, Tutankhamun is portrayed in identical posture and disposition: he rides on his chariot, his bow drawn ready to strike down his targets single-handedly. The difference in the images is found, not in the king, but in his *targets*: in one panel he hunts a pride of lions, in the other he vanquishes Nubians. Here again, the structural similarity between the hunt and war, on the one hand, and between the lion and the enemy, on the other, is underscored and powerfully portrayed. To conquer the lion in hunt is equivalent to conquering the enemy in war—*both* stress the power of the monarch and do so in equally impressive and identical ways. To be sure, one can doubt the reality of such an image. Could the eighteen-year old Tutankhamun actually have killed an entire pride of lions on his own?¹⁶⁶ But such skepticism only serves to highlight the symbolic nature (and power) of the image.

That symbol continued to live on in Egypt as evidenced in the ostrakon from the Valley of the Kings depicting a Ramesside pharaoh spearing a lion (**fig. 4.115**). The accompanying hieratic inscription reads: “The slaughterer of every foreign country, the pharaoh—may he live, prosper, and be well!”¹⁶⁷ It is the deep structural connections between the royal lion hunt and the ideology of

inscriptions such as Amenhotep III’s are purely *fictive*—that is, literary tropes, no more. While in my judgment this option is unlikely, it cannot be completely ruled out, especially given the formulaic use of previous royal material in dynastic Egypt.

¹⁶³ Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 2:232.

¹⁶⁴ See Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 57; Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, 100 n. 3.

¹⁶⁵ See Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, 100 n. 3; idem, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 295 fig. 399a and the caption there; and idem, *Studien III*, 147–48.

¹⁶⁶ So, rightly, Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs: An Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 56–57.

¹⁶⁷ Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 2:390.

monarchy that explains what at first glance seems discontinuous between the inscription and the image.¹⁶⁸ This connection also blunts Aldred's criticism of Ramesses III's lion hunt at Medinet Habu (**fig. 4.116**). It is, in his opinion, "the uninspired assemblage and carving of a subject that probably now had only symbolic relevance."¹⁶⁹ Quite apart from his aesthetic judgment, the symbolic relevance that Aldred seems to denigrate is far from unimportant, especially as it is related to what Aldred later calls "a prophylactic icon" wherein "the giant figure of the pharaoh opposes a disordered mass of human and animal foes, and so protects the holy precincts from evil."¹⁷⁰ "Symbolic" or not, the "relevance" of such an image of the pharaoh, conqueror-of-lions, should not be underestimated.

The royal lion hunt in Egypt, in sum, is woven deeply into the ideology of kingship—at least in the New Kingdom's version thereof. But the same is true, even *more* true, for Mesopotamia¹⁷¹ and it is nowhere more apparent than in Assyrian royal ideology.

Of course, earlier monarchs, for example Šulgi (2094–2047), are said to have fought or pursued lions.¹⁷² But it was the Assyrian kings who took special pride in the motif, which achieved an artistic climax in the reliefs of Ashurbanipal.¹⁷³ Even so, much earlier, Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076) was able to brag that he killed enormous numbers of lions: "By the command of the god Ninurta, who loves me, I killed on foot 120 lions with my wildly outstanding assault. In addition, 800 lions I felled from my light chariot."¹⁷⁴ Similar deeds are recounted of Aššur-bēl-kala (1073–1056):

He killed from his ... chariot (and) on foot with the spear 120 lions with his wildly vigorous assault. He felled ... lions with the *mace*.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ It may also explain the size of the lion, which Hayes calls "disproportionately small" (*Scepter of Egypt*, 2:390). But is it not equally (if not more) likely that the king is portrayed disproportionately large? Cf. **fig. 4.89** above.

¹⁶⁹ Aldred, *Egyptian Art*, 201.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ On the hunt in Mesopotamia, see, generally, Armas Salonen, *Jagd und Jagdtiere im alten Mesopotamien* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1976); and Wolfgang Heimpel and L. Trümpelmann, "Jagd," *RIA* 5:234–38.

¹⁷² See Lewis, "CT 13.33–34," 42, citing G. R. Castellino, *Two Šulgi Hymns* (Rome: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, 1972), 36–39, 117–19 (IV.60–62, 65–67, 75).

¹⁷³ See Elnathan Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph in a Prism Fragment of Ashurbanipal (82–5–22,2)," in *Assyria 1995*, 339; and Pauline Albenda, "Lions on Assyrian Wall Reliefs," *JANES* 6 (1974): 1–27.

¹⁷⁴ *i-na šī-qir^d nin-urta ra-ši-mi-ia 2 šu-ši* UR.MAœ.MEŠ *i-na lib-bi-ia ek-di i-na qit-ru-ub mi-it-lu-ti-ia i-na ĠIR.MEŠ-ia lu a-duk ù 8 ME* UR.MAœ.MEŠ *i-na ĠIŠ.GIGIR-ia*; RIMA 2:26 (A.0.87.1) vi.76–80. Cf. also Grayson, *ARI*, 2:16 (line 45); Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 56; and *CAD* N/2, 194. For the general phenomenon among Assyrian kings, see Streck, *Assurbanipal*, 2:304–305 n. 1 (who also includes a reference to Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884).

¹⁷⁵ *2 šu-ši* UR.MAœ.MEŠ *ina lib-bi-šu ek-di ina qit-ru-ub me-ej-lu-ti-šu ina ĠIŠ.GIGIR-šu pa-at-tu-te ina ĠIR.MEŠ-šu ina ĠIŠ pa-aš-j i i-duk* (blank) UR.MAœ.MEŠ; RIMA 2:103

Ashur-dan II (934–912) also boasts of similar exploits:

[The gods Ninurta and Nergal], who love my priesthood, gave to me the wild beasts (and) commanded me [to hunt]. I killed from my ... chariot (and) on my swift feet [with the spear] 120 lions within [...]¹⁷⁶

as does Adad-narari II (911–891):

The gods Ninurta (and) Nergal, who love my priesthood, gave to me the wild beasts and commanded me to hunt. I killed 360 lions from my ... chariot, with my valorous assault, (and) on my swift feet with the spear¹⁷⁷

and, still later, Shalmaneser III (858–824):

The gods Ninurta and Nergal, who love my priesthood, gave to me the wild beasts and commanded me to hunt. I killed from my ... chariot 373 wild bulls (and) 399 lions with my valorous assault.¹⁷⁸

The degree of similarity in these inscriptions is striking. They are obviously formulaic. Several of them go so far as to indicate that the kings in question, separated by more than a century, nevertheless killed the same number of lions exactly. Also notable is the connection of this hunt to the gods, specifically Ninurta and Nergal, a point that is discussed further below.

Not all textual instances of the Assyrian king hunting lions are so formulaic. To cite a few examples, there are a number of inscriptions—some with associated iconography—of Ashurnasirpal II that recount how he killed lions.¹⁷⁹ On several bronze strips that depict the king hunting lions and wild oxen is the inscription “I slew wild oxen on the Euphrates” or “I slew lions on

(A.0.89.7) iv.9b-11 (the broken obelisk; emphasis there). Note the earlier mention of Ninurta and Nergal “who love his priesthood” (iv.1).

¹⁷⁶ [ninurta u palil] ša SANGA-ti i-ra-mu bu-ul EDIN.MEŠ ú-šat-li-mu-ni-m[a] [epēš bušbu-ri] i iq-bu-ni-ma 2 šu-ši UR.MAœ.MEŠ i-na qé-reb [...]-na GIŠ.GIGIR-ia pa-tu-te i-na GİR.II.MEŠ-ia la-sa-ma-ā[e] [ina pašj] a-duk; RIMA 2:135 (A.0.98.1) 68-71a; cf. CAD N/2, 195.

¹⁷⁷ ^dnin-urta ū^dIGI.DU ša SANGA-ti i-ra¹-mu i¹MÁŠ.ANŠE¹ EDIN ú-šat-li-mu-ni-ma e-peš ba-ša-ri iq-bu-ni 6 šu-ši UR.MAœ.MEŠ ina i¹GIŠ¹.GIGIR-ia pa-at-tu-te ina i¹qí¹-it-ru-ub me-ej-lu-ti-ia ina GİR.II.MEŠ-ia i¹la¹-as-ma-te ina i¹pa-áš(?)¹-j i a-duk; RIMA 2:154 (A.0.99.2) lines 122-124a; cf. also CAD N/2, 195.

¹⁷⁸ ^dnin-urta ū^dIGI.DU ša SANGA-ti i-ra-am-mu MÁŠ.ANŠE EDIN ú-šat-li-mu-ni-ma e-peš ba-šu-ri iq-bu-ni 3 ME 73 GU₄.AM.MEŠ 3 ME 99 UR.MAœ.MEŠ ina GIŠ.GIGIR.MEŠ-ia pa-tu-te ina qí-it-ru-ub me-j-lu-ti-ia a-duk; RIMA 3:41 (A.0.102.6) iv.40-44a; cf. CAD N/2, 194.

¹⁷⁹ Ashurnasirpal has his share of formulaic inscriptions as well, as when he indicates that he killed “370 lions like caged birds with the spear” (3 ME 70 UR.MAœ.MEŠ KAL.MEŠ GIM MUŠEN.MEŠ qu-up-pi ina GIŠ pu-aš-j i a-duk; RIMA 2:226-227 [A.0.101.2] lines 40-42; cf. Grayson, *ARI*, 2:150; Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 56) after Ninurta and Nergal, who love his priesthood, gave him the wild beasts and commanded him to hunt. Quite similar is the text from the North West Palace at Nimrud, though there Ashurnasirpal kills “450 strong lions” (4 ME 50 UR.MAœ.MEŠ KAL.MEŠ a-duk; RIMA 2:291 [A.0.101.30] line 84b-86; citation from line 86).

the River Baliḫ.”¹⁸⁰ On the Kurkh Monolith, in the process of recounting his fifth campaign, the king states: “I killed with my fierce bow five lions before the city Malḫ ina in the land of ʿæatti.”¹⁸¹ Or there is Šamši-Adad V (823–811) who states that he killed three lions “[w]hile traversing the gorge between the cities Zaddi and Zaban.”¹⁸²

It is from the palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud, however, that the first major monumental reliefs devoted to the Assyrian royal lion hunt are found (**figs. 4.117–119**).¹⁸³ Frankfort comments:

We must presume that such scenes were intended to demonstrate the king’s prowess, but the effect is heightened by indirect means. Whether intentionally or not, the lion appears as the main actor. His immensely powerful body dwarfs all the other figures.¹⁸⁴

This judgment could be reframed: the dominance of the lion (the musculature and molding of the lower legs and claws, in particular, should be noted) makes the king’s victory over this beast that much more remarkable. Even this impressive, terrifying specimen is no match for the king’s bow and skill; his arrows have already found their mark—in two of the reliefs, a lion already lies (dead) beneath his horses.¹⁸⁵ The conclusion for the lion that rises up on the back of the chariot (**fig. 4.117**) is, proverbially, foregone.

This assessment is not to denigrate the power of the lion or the threat it poses. These elements are clearly present; the king’s power is simply greater.¹⁸⁶ The same holds true for Ashurbanipal’s hunt scenes from his North Palace at Nineveh, of which many exist (see **figs. 4.120–124**).¹⁸⁷ What is

¹⁸⁰ UR.MAæ.MEŠ ina UGU ÍD *ba-li-ḫi a-duk*; RIMA 2:350 (A.0.101.93); cf. RIMA 2:350 (A.0.101.94). See also Russell, *Writing on the Wall*, 55–57 for a discussion.

¹⁸¹ 5 UR.MAæ.MEŠ ina SAG URU ṛ *mal (?)¹-ḫi-na ina KUR ḫi-at-te ina GIŠ.BAN-a ez-ze-te ū-šam-qīt*; RIMA 2.258 (A.0.101.19) lines 33–34; cf. CAD N/2, 195.

¹⁸² *ina bi-rit URU za-ad-di URU za-ban BAL na-at-bak KUR-e 3 UR.MAæ.MEŠ ḫar^{jar}-du-te a-duk*; RIMA 3:187 (A.0.103.1) iv.2b–3.

¹⁸³ For a study, see Pauline Albenda, “Ashurnasirpal II Lion Hunt Relief BM124534,” *JNES* 31 (1972): 167–78. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 132–33 points out that the lion hunt scene would have been to the king’s left as he sat on the dais. There are earlier royal hunts, of course, the first being that on the lowest register of the White Obelisk, but these involve bulls, ibexes, and/or wild onagers—not lions *per se*. Lion hunts may have appeared on lost panels of such pieces but that is impossible to know now.

¹⁸⁴ Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 160.

¹⁸⁵ On the positioning, see Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 56 n. 13.

¹⁸⁶ See Albenda, “Ashurnasirpal II,” 175–78 and figs. 11–13 for a compositional analysis that shows how the scene in BM 124534 emphasizes the king.

¹⁸⁷ Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, 77 mentions 18 lions in the first (of three in same corridor) composition alone. On the significance of the number, see further below. For the hunting reliefs proper see R. D. Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, 668–627 B.C.* (London: British Museum Publications, 1976), 12b–14a, 19, 37a, 49b–54a and Pls. V–XIII, XLVI–LIX. For further bibliography, see Weissert, “Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph,” 339 n. 2. The north palace was built around 645 (Reade, *Assyrian*

striking in these images—at least to modern sensibilities—is what Woolley called the “astonishing sympathy” with which the lions are treated.¹⁸⁸ He goes on to state that while “the Assyrian monarch wanted to have portrayed in detail his prowess in the hunt...the artist’s summary is ‘*Sunt lacrymae rerum*’.”¹⁸⁹ This sentiment has been echoed by other scholars as well,¹⁹⁰ but it may be anachronistic. Julian Reade comments:

We might indeed imagine that the sculptor was cleverly pointing out the contrast between the cruel king and his noble victims, but we should not forget that the people for whom these sculptures were designed saw the king as the paragon of nobility and the lions as cruel enemies who deserved a painful, even ludicrous death.¹⁹¹

Perhaps this goes too far in the other direction, but an iconographical preoccupation with the monarch can be supported by recourse to other, more aesthetic considerations. Woolley, for instance, posits that the lack of background or landscape for the scene (note the numerous isolated ground lines) demonstrates that “this slaughter...is one of the universal verities and requires no setting.”¹⁹²

Woolley may be guilty of overreading; even so, the symbolism of the hunt cannot be overstated. Indeed, interpretations that tend too much toward the naturalistic miss the overall point of these compositions.¹⁹³ Certainly any observer realizes that the environment of this hunt is carefully controlled: beaters keep the lions within the king’s range or keep them from getting too close to him;¹⁹⁴ prior to the hunt the lions are brought to the field in cages and

Sculpture, 73). The paintings of the lion hunt from Til Barsip (**figs. 4.125-126**) may also date to Ashurbanipal, though the exact chronology is debated. Additionally, Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, 78, mentions now lost slabs showing Ashurbanipal hunting lions in thickets beside a river or canal. Note also *Art and Empire*, fig. 41—a broken clay model in high relief of a king killing a lion, perhaps used as a model for the larger stone subjects, also dating to the time of Ashurbanipal. Lastly, note the presence of UR.MAœ.MEŠ in a broken context in K 2802 ii.7 (Streck, *Assurbanipal*, 2:196-97).

¹⁸⁸ Woolley, *Art of the Middle East*, 191.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Cf., e.g., Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 181; Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 153; Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 190.

¹⁹¹ Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, 73; cf. idem in *Art and Empire*, 88. Nevertheless, Reade does draw attention to the defacement of the relief where Ashurbanipal holds the lion by the tail. Here the lion’s tail “has been chipped away, so that the lion has been, as it were, set loose; this defacement was probably the action, at once humorous and symbolic, of some enemy soldier busy ransacking the palace in 612 BC” (ibid., 87). Modern sympathies with the dying lions may, in short, have been echoed in antiquity!

¹⁹² Woolley, *Art of the Middle East*, 191.

¹⁹³ E.g., Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, 72. Some naturalistic explanations are quite reasonable. Cf., e.g., Weissert, “Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph,” 346 and n. 20.

¹⁹⁴ They were probably forbidden to kill the lions. See Weissert, “Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph,” 345-46 and n. 18 for a story from Ctesias, which tells of one Megabyzus, an official of Artaxerxes I, who killed a lion with his spear before the king had a chance to

then released;¹⁹⁵ there are even spectators! In short, the hunt is obviously *staged*. But this fact makes the reliefs even that much more remarkable: this hunt is meaningful *despite* the fact that it is orchestrated and planned, even to the last detail. Indeed, the careful planning that has gone into the hunt demonstrates that this is meaningful business.¹⁹⁶

What is that business and what is meaningful about it? What is the *raison d'être* of the lion hunt? The answer is fundamentally no different than what was already apparent in several of the objects and texts already treated above:

the killing of lions by the king was not only for the sake of sport, but was a religious act and became a symbol of royalty, the motif of the power of the king over the powers of chaos.¹⁹⁷

In the case of Ashurbanipal, further insight into his (and/or his artists', scribes', and subjects') understanding of this event is gained by looking at the inscriptions that accompany the images of his hunt. The five *an%ku* epigraphs from the hunting reliefs follow:

1. "I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for whom Assur, king of the gods, and Ishtar, lady of battle, decreed a heroic destiny [...]. Nergal who goes in front, caused me to hunt nobly. Upon the plain, as if for pleasure,

shoot it. Megabyzus was sentenced to death for this (!), though he was later pardoned. Another excellent and humorous example is found in ARM 2:106:

"Tell my lord: Your servant Yakim-Addu sends the following message: A short time ago I wrote to my lord as follows: 'A lion was caught in the loft of a house in Akkaka. My lord should write me whether this lion should remain in that same loft until the arrival of my lord, or whether I should have it brought to my lord.' But letters from my lord were slow in coming and the lion has been in the loft for five days. Although they threw him a dog and a pig, he refused to eat them. I was worrying: 'Heaven forbid that this lion pine away.' I became scared, but eventually I got the lion into a wooden cage and loaded it on a boat to have it brought to my lord" (A. L. Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967], 108).

A much later example from Greco-Roman antiquity can be found in Cassius Dio's *Roman History* 67.14.1-3, which tells how Domitian was jealous of Glabrio, who was able to kill a lion, and how Domitian put him to death for just such acts: "This ability in the arena was the chief cause of the emperor's anger against him,—an anger prompted by jealousy....Domitian...had imposed on him the task of killing a large lion. Glabrio not only had escaped all injury but had despatched [*sic*] the creature with most accurate aim" (Herbert Baldwin Foster, *Dio's Rome*, volume 5: *Extant Books 61-76* [Troy: Pafraets, 1906], 171).

¹⁹⁵ See **fig. 4.127** for lions in cages on a relief from the tomb of Ptahhotep from Saqqara.

¹⁹⁶ Though this is not to say that apologetic motifs are not at work. Weissert, for instance, notes the innovative description used for the lions: *ša ʔi/rišu* ("of its plain")—"a term which is used in the hunting epigraphs when referring to the caged lions, and which is supposed to convince the reader that the lions in the arena were not harmless creatures, as were those born in Assyrian zoos, but threatening, and caught in their natural habitat to serve as worthy antagonists of the planned drama" ("Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph," 351 n. 43).

¹⁹⁷ Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 57.

[...] I went out. In the plain, a wide expanse, raging lions, a fierce mountain breed, attacked [me and] surrounded the chariot, my royal vehicle. At the command of Assur and Ishtar, the great gods, my lords, with a single team [harnes]sed to my yoke, I scattered the pack of these lions. [Ummana]pp[a, son of U]rtaki, king of Elam, who fled and submitted [to me...] a lion sprang upon him [...] he feared, and he implored my lordship (for aid)."¹⁹⁸

2. "I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for my great sport, an angry lion of the plain from a cage they brought out. On foot, three times I pierced him with an arrow, (but) he did not die. At the command of Nergal, king of the plain, who granted me strength and manliness, afterward, with the iron dagger from my belt, I stabbed him (and) he died."¹⁹⁹
3. "I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for my pleasure, on foot, a fierce lion of the plain, I seized by its ears. With the encouragement of Assur and Ishtar, lady of battle, with my spear I pierced its body."²⁰⁰
4. "I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for my princely sport, a lion of the plain I seized by the tail. At the command of Ninurta and Nergal, the gods, my trust, with my mace I smashed its skull."²⁰¹
5. "I, Assurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, whom Assur and Mullissu have granted exalted strength. The lions that I killed: I held the fierce bow of Ishtar, lady of battle, over them, I set up an offering over them, (and) I made a libation over them."²⁰²

Inscriptions such as these—and there are a number of them²⁰³—have been the focus of an excellent study by Elnathan Weissert.²⁰⁴ He has outlined a number of common elements that he believes form a *topos*, the "Lion Hunt by Chariot

¹⁹⁸ Russell, *Writing on the Wall*, 201 (NP:S¹:A-B; from the figure depicting the king in the chariot with spear); see note 202 below. Cf. also Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 153.

¹⁹⁹ Russell, *Writing on the Wall*, 201 (NP:S¹:CL:top; from the figure with the king holding the lion by its beard); see note 202 below.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 202 (NP:S¹:C:middle; from the figure with the king holding the lion by its ears); see note 202 below.

²⁰¹ Ibid. (NP:S¹:D:middle; from the figure with the king holding the lion by its tail); see note 202 below. Streck, *Assurbanipal*, 2:306 n. 5 mentions a similar scene on a relief of Nebuchadnezzar II at Wādī Brîs%in Lebanon as well as another similar Hittite relief from Ordasu. For the weapon mentioned in the Ashurbanipal inscription, unfortunately broken in the relief, see Streck, *Assurbanipal*, 2:307-308 n. 9.

²⁰² Russell, *Writing on the Wall*, 202 (NP:S¹:D:bottom; from the figure with the king pouring a libation over the dead lions). In all of the above texts, Russell is dependent on (with some revisions) P. Gerardi, "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs: The Development of the Epigraphic Text," *JCS* 40 (1988): 1-35. See also *ARAB* 2:391-92 (§§1020-1026) and Streck, *Assurbanipal*, 2:304-11.

²⁰³ These include the "Great Hunting Text" (see §4.2.1 above), as well as the "clay tablets containing archival copies of (or *Vorlage*-texts to) votive inscriptions whose plots are devoted mainly to the prowess of the royal hunter" (Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph," 340).

²⁰⁴ Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph" 339-58.

(in the Plain).”²⁰⁵ He has also noted that Ashurbanipal’s hunts are of two types. In the first—attested in the first epigraph (#1 above), the Great Hunting Text (see §4.2.1 above), and the Prism Fragment (82–5–22,2)²⁰⁶—where the king is portrayed as fighting in the plain,

the king does not simply amuse himself during the hunt, nor does he take part in a ritualized drama within an urban arena—two aspects which are attested to in other sources—but he is portrayed as coming to the help of both people and animals living in the plain, thus fulfilling his traditional role of a faithful shepherd.²⁰⁷

The other type, which picks up on the “ritualized drama within an urban area”—attested in the reliefs of room C of the North Palace—is no less propagandistic. Indeed, Weissert makes a strong case that K 6085 “is no[thing] other than an archival copy of (or *Vorlage*-text to) the inscription”²⁰⁸ which would have been engraved on the stela (replete with king-hunting-lion image) depicted on top of the hill overlooking the hunting area (fig. 4.128). His argument depends, in part, on the number of lions presented on the reliefs from room C (eighteen) and that are mentioned in K 6085: “I [quelled] the tumult of eighteen raging lions.”²⁰⁹ The number seems realistically low, but Weissert thinks the connection is purposeful:

The number of lions must...have a meaning, since it had been decided in advance to bring the spectacle to an end with the death of the eighteenth lion. This is no accident, surely, for the number of gates in the wall surrounding greater Nineveh was also eighteen....[T]o trace the possible link...we will have to remember that...the Great Hunting Text specifically noted that frightening lions were obstructing the roads. The conclusion is therefore unavoidable: by killing eighteen lions in the Nineveh arena, Ashurbanipal symbolically secured each exit from the capital city, every gate and road leading out of it being secured by the killing of one lion.²¹⁰

In both of the hunt-types delineated by Weissert, then, iconography and inscription combine to merge “the public image of the triumphant king and the public image of the lion hunter...into a single figure—that of Ashurbanipal.”²¹¹

²⁰⁵ See *ibid.*, 341–46, especially fig. 1 on 344–45.

²⁰⁶ See *ibid.*, 357–58 for an edition with notes. The pertinent lines are 3’–10’ (but note also the *akštu* episode in lines 11’ff.):

3’ [As (if for) p]leasu[re.....]

4’ [I we]nt out. In the plai[n, a wide expanse]—

5’–6’ [befo]re my arrival hug[e lions, a fier]ce [mountain breed, attacked] (there) the cattle-p[en(s)].

7’ [With] my [single] team, harnessed to [my] l[ordly] vehicle,

8’ [fort]y minutes after daybre[ak],

9’–10’ I pier[ce]d the throats o[f] ragi[ng] l[i]ons, each (lion) with a single arrow.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 343.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 351.

²⁰⁹ ša 18 UR.MAœ.MEŠ *na-ad-ru-ti uz-za-šú-nu* ʾ ʾ ʾ [šap-ši-ij] (*ibid.*, 345).

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 355.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 350.

The theological ramifications of all this should not be missed: in the Prism fragment, the lion hunt is followed immediately by mention of an *akṣtu* festival, suggesting that

the king was believed to be following in the footsteps of his divine patrons...when the new year approached, Ashur, the king of the gods, and probably also Ishtar, his warrior daughter, were expected to subdue the mythical hosts of chaos in the plain; and the king, the ruler of [hu]mankind, was for his part expected to subdue the incarnate hosts of chaos, that is, the lions.²¹²

So, again, the king acts *under the aegis* of the gods, *much like* the gods.²¹³ It is thus not surprising to find the gods—especially Ishtar²¹⁴—mentioned in these inscriptions, nor is it surprising to find Ashurbanipal pouring out a libation to Ishtar at the conclusion of the hunt (fig. 4.129) or to hear that he performs his hunt on a field consecrated to her.²¹⁵

There was, in short, “a definite religious purpose” to the hunt.²¹⁶ That purpose was evidently “not only to show the king’s prowess with various weapons, but to make an offering to the gods.”²¹⁷ But the theology of the hunt is obviously also closely tied in with royal ideology.²¹⁸ Even when the pretense

²¹² Ibid., 349; see also 346-48 on the “inherent affinity between royal lion hunts and the *akṣtu* celebrations in Arbela and in Ashur on the one hand, and between royal lion hunts and triumphs which were carried out in these cities on the other” (348). Cf. also 343 for the “sins” of the lions.

²¹³ Albenda, “Ashurnasirpal II,” 176-78 and fig. 13 points out that the composition of BM124534 depicts Ashurnasirpal in the same attitude as the god Aššur who appears in the winged sun disk. She concludes: “the heroic stature described on the lion-hunt bas-relief is at once elevated from the realm of the human to the divine. This is not to imply that the Assyrian king himself assumed a godlike identity but, rather, that the superhuman qualities associated with the status of kingship originate from divine sources” (176). I would agree though I would not be so quick to eliminate the godlike identity or at least godlike association for the monarch (for another god-king similarity, see Arvid S. Kapelrud, “Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings,” *Or* 32 [1963]: 56-62). Albenda goes on to emphasize a “twofold meaning...inherent within the lion hunt scene. While the recognizable aspect deals with the human level of activity, which exalts the king’s prowess in the hunt, the less obvious but more purposeful intent asserts the divine power behind the king’s success in battle against his enemies; and in this instance the lions may signify the foes who are attacked and subsequently defeated without hesitancy” (178).

²¹⁴ Probably Ishtar of Arbela; see Weissert, “Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph,” 346-47.

²¹⁵ K 6085, which specifies it is Ishtar of Nineveh (see Weissert, “Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph,” 350).

²¹⁶ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 56-57.

²¹⁷ Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 153. Cf. Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 33.

²¹⁸ For the issue of visual propaganda see Winter, “Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative,” 2-38; idem, “Art in Empire,” 359-81; and Izak Cornelius, “The Image of Assyria: An Iconographical Approach by way of a Study of Selected Material on the Theme of ‘Power and Propaganda’ in the Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs,” *OTE* 2/1 (1989): 41-60; and the literature cited in these articles.

of the hunt is a plague of lions—that is, where real lions are portrayed as threatening real persons or the realm²¹⁹—this is drawn into the larger rhetorical functions of the hunt.

Those functions are several, but one final image deserves attention in this regard. It is the well-known image of Ashurbanipal dispatching a lion with his sword while he grasps it at its throat/beard area (**fig. 4.130**). The similarities between this image and the Neo-Assyrian royal seal are obvious and have long been noticed. It is “the symbolic act of the royal seal translated into reality,” a way for Ashurbanipal to “publicly realize the image of the brave hunter, which for more than two hundred years had been represented on the imperial seal.”²²⁰ But how should this connection be interpreted? Many scholars have tended toward a purely naturalistic interpretation. Reade, for instance, highlights the unreality of the scene:

Yet by this time the lion was already at death’s door; if it really stood, it must have been because the king was holding it up. This explains the absence of any protective material on the king’s left arm. It is not credible that the king exposed himself to mauling, from a slightly wounded but still vigorous lion, in the way that this sculpture, viewed in isolation, implies. In its true context, the scene can be understood quite differently.²²¹

But the unreality of the event is beside the point. The lion in question is indubitably wounded, perhaps even mortally so (note the arrows, aside from the sword thrust itself), but the artist did *not* include the arm-guard²²² and the second *anāku* inscription (#2 above) specifically indicates this lion is not dead until *after* Ashurbanipal runs it through. Hence, both observer and reader alike walk away with one impression: that of the power of the king who is able to dispatch lions in such a fashion. Cornelius summarizes the point nicely:

The dangerous power of the lions is never ignored, they attack with ferocity, but are subdued by the king. They are shown as ordinary dying animals. Gone is the absolute power, they lie with blood gushing from their veins, dying, overcome by the mighty king of Assyria, conqueror of man and beast.²²³

Surely such a king commands fealty and fear from his subjects!

Weissert wonders if Ahurbanipal’s hunt “constitute[s] an isolated spectacle, staged by an ingenious monarch well aware of the immense impact

²¹⁹ As in the “Great Hunting Text” (see §4.2.1) or *anāku* inscription #1 above. Cf. Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 56.

²²⁰ Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, 77; and Weissert, “Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph,” 356, respectively. So also Winter, “*Le Palais imaginaire*,” 55 n. 2.

²²¹ Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, 77. So, similarly, Frankfort who states that the scene “is astonishing, for the Assyrian artist, whatever his methods, represents real events” (*Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 187).

²²² For the arm-guard, see *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 187 and 390 n. 51 and see **fig. 4.144** below.

²²³ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 56.

such a public event would arouse.”²²⁴ Perhaps so; surely, Ashurbanipal’s ingenuity should not be underestimated. However, as has already been demonstrated, the royal lion hunt is not restricted to the Assyrians, nor to Ashurnasirpal II and Ashurbanipal. Indeed, this important motif was quite widespread, occurring in locales outside of the royal centers of Egypt and Assyria and, indeed, in smaller media than monumental reliefs.²²⁵ Furthermore, the conception is not only widespread, it is also attested very early.²²⁶ This being the case, a thorough review is impossible here, so it must suffice to list some examples in rapid-fire succession.

From the Late Bronze Age, there is a lion hunt relief from Alaja Hüyük (**fig. 4.131**) and two images of lion hunts from Ugarit: the first of these is a seal depicting a lion hunt by chariot (**fig. 4.132**). The second is an ivory (**fig. 4.133**) where “the conquest of the enemy is combined with the lion-hunt, the subdued lion becoming the symbol of the king’s power(s).”²²⁷ From Tell Halaf is another lion hunt by chariot (**fig. 4.134**). Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I glyptic also has its fair share of the lion hunt motif, including the hunt by chariot (**fig. 4.135**)²²⁸ and with bow on foot (**figs. 4.136–137**)²²⁹ or while seated (**figs. 4.138–142**).²³⁰

²²⁴ Weissert, “Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph,” 356.

²²⁵ Note the reference to a hunt in the earliest Hittite document, the Anitta chronicle, where Anitta claims to have killed two lions, along with other animals, “and 120 (other) wild animals, (among them) bears, leopards, lions, deer, gazelle and [wild goats]” (Billie Jean Collins, “Animals in Hittite Literature,” in Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World*, 250). For other examples of the royal lion hunt, including later Sasanian kings, see Streck, *Assurbanipal*, 2:416-17; and H. Kindermann, “al-Asad,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 1:683.

²²⁶ See, e.g., Greta Jans, “Lion Hunt by Wagon on a Syrian Seal Impression from the Third Millennium,” *UF* 25 (1993): 181-88.

²²⁷ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 57.

²²⁸ See also Shuval in *Studien III*, figs. 037, 042; Keel in *Studien III*, 38 Abb. 12, 15.

²²⁹ See also Keel in *Studien III*, 33 n. 11 for other examples of the pharaoh on foot with bow hunting lions. Given the close parallels between **fig. 4.136** and the seal from Lachish Stratum VI (ca. 1200-1150; **fig. 3.11**), the two may be dated similarly. For additional examples, see Shuval in *Studien III*, fig. 053, and, further, Keel in *Studien III*, 271-72 with Taf. XIII, 3; XIV, 1-3, XV, 1-3. In Chapter 3, I posited that in some of the seals from ancient Israel/Palestine where similar iconography is found, the lion in question may be a hunting companion of the king (§3.3). Keel in *Studien III*, 29-40 disagrees, but note Rühlmann, “Der Löwe in altägyptischen Triumphalbild,” 652, who agrees that the lion in such presentations “ist offenbar sein [the hunter’s] Helfer” or is shown “als Helfer auf der Jagd.” If so, **fig. 4.137** and **fig. 4.142** should not be considered as lion hunts proper given the posture of the lion. The antagonistic stances in **figs. 4.136, 4.138-39, 4.141**, however, do argue for a lion hunt.

²³⁰ Note the connection in **fig. 4.139** between the lion hunt and the conquering of the enemy given the stance of the intervening human figure who is apparently bound. For the posture of the lion in **fig. 4.142**, see the previous note. Here, too, the lion may well be a companion.

Iron Age II has a number of images pertaining to the lion hunt. From the early-ninth century comes a basalt relief from the palace of king Kapara at Tell Halaf (Guzana) that depicts a lion hunt (**fig. 4.143**). An ivory plaque showing the monarch/mighty one spearing a lion (**fig. 4.144**) was found in Ziwiye.²³¹ It is notable insofar as this figure thrusts a small shield or type of hand/arm-guard in the mouth of lion with his left hand while spearing the lion with his right. Some have seen this as the kind of equipment lacking in Ashurbanipal's encounter with the lion (**fig. 4.130**). Whatever the case, the Ziwiye relief evidences Assyrian influence and may represent a transitional period between Ashurnasirpal II and Ashurbanipal's depictions of similar encounters.²³²

Another ivory from Ziwiye, this one probably from the end of the 8th century, shows a lion hunt by chariot (**fig. 4.145**). Another from the same context and century shows a lion hunt by horse back in its lowest relief, though the full presentation is too broken to say much more (**fig. 4.146**). Both of these ivories also bear marks of Assyrian influence, as does an orthostat relief from Malatya, which contains the same theme (**fig. 4.147**). Mixed in style, but roughly contemporaneous with the objects mentioned above are the round unguent box (**fig. 4.148**) and bronze bowl (**fig. 4.149**)—both from Nimrud—both of which show signs of Egyptian influence and, more specifically, Phoenician manufacture.²³³ The seal of Mikabel (מִיכָאֵל; **fig. 4.150**) may also be of Phoenician origin, though Avigad and Sass have opined that it is probably Ammonite.²³⁴

The Persian Period also knows of the royal lion hunt. There are, of course, the many scenes of heroic encounter where the hero battling the lion is frequently portrayed in royal dress (e.g., **fig. 4.151**). Many of these fit best in the category of images of encounter and control (see §4.3.1.1). But the hunt by chariot is also attested, as, for example, in the famous seal of Darius²³⁵ found in Thebes (**fig. 4.152**).²³⁶

Before taking leave of this subject, one enduring question must be mentioned, though it cannot be answered here: it seems that, for Mesopotamia at least, there is a large gap from the earliest depictions of the monarch fighting lions to the revival of the royal lion hunt in Assyrian times.²³⁷ What might

²³¹ Edith Porada, *The Art of Ancient Iran: Pre-Islamic Cultures* (rev. ed.; New York: Greystone, 1969), 131 notes the same motif in a garment pattern on a relief of Ashurnasirpal II.

²³² See Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, 131; and Parrot, *Nineveh*, 145.

²³³ Both probably date from the 9th or 8th century. See Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 315, 326, respectively.

²³⁴ *CWSSS*, 348 (#938).

²³⁵ Probably Darius I (521–486). See Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, 177–78; and Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 183.

²³⁶ Note also Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, 816 for another Persian Period seal. The seal of *tyln* (תִּילָן; **fig. 4.153**), dating from the 5th century shows the same motif in a West Semitic context.

²³⁷ Cf. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 152; Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, 73.

explain this gap? Various answers have been proffered,²³⁸ but for our purposes it is enough to note that the lion hunt by monarch/mighty one is well attested—for Egypt, Mesopotamia, and all parts in between—for the periods most pertinent to the present study, as well as even much later times.²³⁹

4.3.2. *The Monarch/Mighty One as the Lion*

4.3.2.1. *Egypt.*²⁴⁰ The relationship between the monarch/mighty one and the lion was not exclusively antagonistic, however. As already indicated, there was an early tendency for the monarch/mighty one to be portrayed not just fighting lions but actually *as* a lion. Here again, one need look no earlier than the Lion or Battlefield palette of Predynastic Egypt (**fig. 4.84**) where many scholars believe the lion represents—not a scavenger—but the victorious ruler. The presentation of the monarch as a lion is not solely one where a lion stands for or replaces the monarch in a given scene, however. At times the connection between the lion and the king is more subtle than simple replacement. This is demonstrated, for example, by the fact that from early times the Egyptian king often wore a lion's tail attached to his garments.²⁴¹ Another example is the amalgamation of the king-as-lion via the composite beast of the sphinx—a figure that lies somewhat outside of the concerns of this work, but which must be mentioned briefly nevertheless.

The practice of figuring the monarch's head on a lion's body “probably dates at least as early as the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty.”²⁴² In ancient Egypt, the connection is not only iconographic, it is even orthographic: frequently the lion hieroglyph was used in the word for “prince” or “local ruler.”²⁴³ Many of the iconographic connections have a long history. The king

²³⁸ E.g., Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, 72; idem in *Art and Empire*, 51, who states that beginning at some point in the 18th century only royalty could kill lions. Reade is presumably alluding to some of the Mari letters (see §§4.2.2 and note 194 above). See also Weissert, “Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph,” 346 n. 18 and Elena Cassin, “Le roi et le lion,” *RHR* 198 (1981): 355-401.

²³⁹ For some later examples, see J. K. Anderson, “Hunting,” in *OEANE* 3:123-24; Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, figs. 172 and 188; Friedrich Sarre, *Die Kunst des alten Persien* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1923), Taf. 108, 112, 113. The contest scene also endures into the later periods (see Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 185).

²⁴⁰ A brief summary of the Egyptian material is found in James F. Romano, “The Beast of Kings: Male Lion Imagery and Kingship in the Ancient Nile Valley,” in *Egypt in Africa* (ed. Theodore Celenko; Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1996), 66-67; and Emily Teeter, “Animals in Egyptian Literature,” in Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World*, 267.

²⁴¹ See Adolf Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Dover, 1971), 55, 59; eventually, the lion's tail gave way to a bull's tail.

²⁴² Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 2:92. The monumental sphinx at Giza dates to this period.

²⁴³ See Arielle P. Kozloff, ed., *Animals in Ancient Art from the Leo Mildenberg Collection* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1981), 57. Note also the use of the lion (along with other animals) as a symbol for kingship on other early palettes (e.g., the Cities

as sphinx/lion, for instance, is frequently encountered, as examples from Amenemhet III (1843–1798) (**fig. 4.156**), Hatshepsut (1479–1457) (**fig. 4.157**), and Amenhotep III (1390–1352) (reinscribed by Tutankhamun) (**fig. 4.158**) show. In these presentations, which continue into the latest periods—note Amasis (Ahmose II) (570–526), who was especially fond of the motif—the king *qua* lion himself assumes the apotropaic function so frequently associated with the lion figure in architectural settings (see §4.5 below).²⁴⁴ This is true primarily of sculpture in the round; the motif on other media—for instance on scarabs from Dynasty 18—is more militaristic in nature, especially as

[t]he only other human figures seen on the scarabs of this period and on the backs of contemporary seals are Nubian and Asiatic captives who appear either alone, kneeling and with their arms tied behind them, or prone beneath the feet of the royal lion or the hooves of the pharaoh's horses.²⁴⁵

The presentation of Neuserre from Dynasty 5 (2500–2350) as a lion with the head of an Amorite in his claw (**fig. 4.159**) demonstrates that the militaristic element was also known and used in the Old Kingdom.

The king-as-lion motif is also frequently encountered in Egyptian literature, specifically in royal inscriptions. It is noteworthy that, again, many of these come from the New Kingdom, especially from the Ramesside kings. So, from Dynasty 18, Thutmose III (1479–1425) is “the wild-looking lion, the son of Sekhmet.”²⁴⁶ In Thutmose's “Hymn of Victory”—the popularity of which is shown in its reuse by Amenhotep III, Seti I, and Ramesses III—Amun-Re speaks of the king, saying: “I have caused them [the isles of Utjenti] to see thy majesty as a fierce-eyed lion, Thou makest them corpses in their valleys.”²⁴⁷

Thutmose III's successors also use the lion comparison with similar effect. Amenhotep II (1427–1400) fights “like a fierce-eyed lion, smiting the countries of Lebanon.”²⁴⁸ Amenhotep III (1390–1352), in a stela set up at the first cataract, is described as a “a fierce-eyed lion, he seized...Kush.”²⁴⁹ The same is true in the Semneh Inscription, describing the defeat of Ibhet:

Ibhet had been haughty, great things were in their hearts, (ʿbutʿ) the fierce-eyed lion, this ruler, he slew them by command of Amon-Atum, his august father; it was he who led him in might and victory.²⁵⁰

Palette [**fig. 4.154**] or the Bull Palette [**fig. 4.155**]). See John Baines, “Origins of Egyptian Kingship,” 95–156, especially 112.

²⁴⁴ Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 123; A. B. Lloyd, “The Late Period, 664–323 BC,” in B. G. Trigger, B. J. Kemp, D. O'Connor, and A. B. Lloyd, *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 289.

²⁴⁵ Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 2:183–84.

²⁴⁶ *TDOT*, 1:378.

²⁴⁷ *ARE*, 2:265 (§660).

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:306 (§783).

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:336 (§844).

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:341 (§853).

And, again, on the Third Pylon at Karnak, the king is “as a fierce-eyed lion, sated in the place ʾ-ʾ of the morning, taking captive.”²⁵¹

From Dynasty 19, Seti I (1294–1279) is portrayed as a “wild looking lion, who treads upon the inaccessible ways of every land.”²⁵² In Seti’s case, this treading was invariably a crushing; the lion motif is used extensively in descriptions of this pharaoh’s many and violent military victories. Over the enemy on scene three, the capture of Pekannah (which apparently transpired somewhere in Canaan),²⁵³ from his reliefs at Karnak, the following is inscribed:

Year 1. King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menmare (Seti I). The destruction which the mighty sword of Pharaoh, L[ife,] P[rosperity,] H[ealth!], made among the vanquished of the Shasu...from the fortress of Tharu...to Pekannah...when his majesty marched against them like a fierce-eyed lion, making them carcasses in their valleys, overturned in their blood like those that exist not...²⁵⁴

Similar sentiment is found in other scenes, including those showing Seti I slaying prisoners before Amon²⁵⁵ or carrying off Hittite prisoners.²⁵⁶

Seti I’s successor, Ramesses II (1279–1213) continued this trend. He was “the strong lion with raised talons and mighty roar, at whose voice the desert animals tremble”²⁵⁷ On the Abu Simbel temple reliefs, in a section depicting the northern wars, the pharaoh is called “Good God, great in terror, victorious lion, lord of the sword.”²⁵⁸ On the Tanis Stela, he is compared to a “lion when he has tasted combat; no land can stand before him, King Ramses II; charging into the array, he turns not back, he is the first of the front rank of his army.”²⁵⁹ In his Kadesh inscription, Ramesses the Great is said to be “like a fierce lion in a valley of desert animals, who goes out in valor and returns when he has triumphed.”²⁶⁰ Ramesses II’s successor, Merenptah (1213–1203), also utilized

²⁵¹ Ibid., 2:367 (§901).

²⁵² Ibid., 3:72 (§143); cf. *TDOT*, 1:378. This is from Scene 17, the battle with the Hittites, from the monumental reliefs at Karnak. The inscription also calls Seti I “mighty Bull, [ready]-horned,” etc. (*ARE*, 3:72 [§143]). This text may be of interest for Job 28:8.

²⁵³ See *ARE*, 3:46–47.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 3:47 (§88).

²⁵⁵ Scene 11: “I have caused them to see thy majesty as [a fierce-eyed lion, so that thou makest] them corpses in their valleys” (*ARE*, 3:58 [§117]). This is apparently the text copied from Amenhotep III.

²⁵⁶ Scene 18, where Seti is again called, among other epithets (including “bull,” “wolf,” etc.), a mighty lion that tramples the inaccessible ways.

²⁵⁷ Manfred Lurker, *An Illustrated Dictionary of the Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 77; Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 59.

²⁵⁸ *ARE*, 3:200 (§465). Cf. the Assuan Stela, where Ramses is called: “the Good God, Montu of millions, mighty like the son of Nut, fighting for...strong-hearted lion” (*ARE*, 3:205 [§480]).

²⁵⁹ *ARE*, 3:209 (§489).

²⁶⁰ William J. Murnane, “The Kingship of the Nineteenth Dynasty: A Study in the Resilience of an Institution,” in *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, 211.

the motif. In the Great Karnak Inscription, it is said of him: “Lo, his majesty was enraged at their report, like a lion...”²⁶¹

It is Ramesses III (1184–1153) of Dynasty 20, however, who may be credited with using the lion metaphor most extensively and most violently. He is “the raging lion, whose claws are on the peoples of the new mountain,” “the strong lion, who seizes with his claws,” or “which seizes game with his teeth.”²⁶² In the Medinet Habu reliefs depicting the first Libyan war (year five), the king is “violent with might, [ʿlike aʿ] mighty [ʿlionʿ] falling upon the sheep”²⁶³ and “like the lion with deep...roar upon the mountain-tops, whose terror is feared from afar.”²⁶⁴ In another inscription, also concerning year five at Medinet Habu, Ramesses III is “the strong-armed son of Amon [who] is behind them [i.e., the enemy] like a young lion.”²⁶⁵ Other examples could be offered,²⁶⁶ and it should be noted that similar comparisons are found in Ramesses III’s own mouth²⁶⁷ and are also predicated, not only of his soldiers,²⁶⁸ but even his ships (cf. **fig. 4.102**)!²⁶⁹

Several items are striking about these royal inscriptions; perhaps the most important observations are that the monarch-as-lion metaphor appears in contexts of military victory and that it is connected to concepts of power, domination, ferocity, and violence. And, before turning to regions to the north and east of Egypt, it should again be pointed out that this type of use continues on, even into the late Egyptian dynasties. Two examples would be Tantamun

²⁶¹ *ARE*, 3:243 (§580).

²⁶² *TDOT*, 1:378.

²⁶³ *ARE*, 4:22 (§41), lines 31–32.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:25 (§46), lines 60–61. The inscription includes other animal comparisons as well: gryphon, panther, bull, etc. The frequency of the lion comparison may indicate that some earlier references in broken contexts (e.g., line 25: “roaring like a lion ʿterribleʿ in rage”; lines 57–58: “...roaring”) may also have been predicated of the king.

²⁶⁵ *ARE*, 4:28–29 (§51). Breasted notes that “[t]he usual epithets of the lion: ‘heavy-voiced, roaring in the mountains, etc.,’ follow here, but are badly copied” (4:29 n. b).

²⁶⁶ E.g., *ARE*, 4:36 (§62) (year 8): “mighty Bull, valiant Lion, strong-armed, lord of might, capturing the Asiatics.” *Ibid.*, 4:45 (§75): “His majesty is like an enraged lion, tearing him that confronts him with his hands (sic!), fighting at close quarters on his right, valiant on his left, like Set; destroying the foe, like Amon-Re.” *Ibid.*, 4:61 (§105): “King Ramses III, sole lord, making his boundary as far as he desires, putting fear and terror in the heart of the Asiatics, mighty Lion, plundering his every adversary, taking captive the lands of the Nine Bows, overthrowing them; a—tempest, he comes up behind his adversaries; they ʿhearʿ his roaring like Baal in heaven.”

²⁶⁷ *ARE*, 4:31 (§55): “My sword has overthrown the Tehenu....I went forth against them like a lion; I smote them, and they were made heaps.”

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:38 (§65): “soldiers of all the choicest of Egypt, being like lions roaring upon the mountain-tops.”

²⁶⁹ Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* (rev. ed.; New York: Paulist, 1997), 143: “These ships were the pride of Egypt, and they roared like lions in the mountains.”

(664–656), the last Pharaoh of Dynasty 25,²⁷⁰ and Amasis (Ahmose II) (570–526) of Dynasty 26, whose love of the king-as-lion/sphinx presentation has already been mentioned above.²⁷¹

4.3.2.2. *Mesopotamia*.²⁷² Mesopotamian monarchs are also associated and identified with the lion in a positive way. Gilgamesh is clothed with a lion skin, though here the dress seems to be different than his Egyptian counterparts, as the outfit is connected with Gilgamesh's mourning for Enkidu.²⁷³ Even so, examples of a monarch/mighty one wearing (portions of) a lion's carcass presumes the prowess and success of the individual in question over the lion. At the same time, the wearing of parts of the lion as a sort of trophy also reflects an appropriation of the animal's own qualities, transferring them, in effect, to the monarch.

Later (though still early) monarchs employ the lion figure in ways familiar from the Egyptian examples. Šulgi claims "[a] fierce-eyed lion, born of the *ushumgal* am I...The open-jawed lion of Utu am I."²⁷⁴ The metaphor is functional as well as ontological: "Like a lion that wearies not of its virility, I arose...Like a young lion (prepared to) *spring* I shook myself loose"; and is specifically connected to fear: "I...[h]ave inspired dread from (my) royal seat like a lion."²⁷⁵ Somewhat later, Lipit-Ištar of Isin (1934–1924) describes himself similarly: "I am a lion who goes before all, I am without opponent."²⁷⁶

Even so, in light of the preceding sections, it is not surprising to find that the use of the lion as a metaphor for the monarch appears with great(er)

²⁷⁰ ARE, 4:468 (§921): "victorious in might on the day of battle, facing the front on the day 'of conflict', lord of valor, like Montu, great in strength, like a fierce-eyed lion, wise-hearted, like Thoth."

²⁷¹ Ibid., 4:512 (§1005): "His majesty fought like a lion, he made a slaughter among them, whose number was unknown." Note also the inscription of the much later King Silko of Nubia (A.D.): ἐγὼ γὰρ εἰς κάτω μέρη λέων εἰμί, καὶ εἰς ἄνω μέρη ἄρξ [= ἄρκτος] εἰμι (TDNT, 4:251 n. 2).

²⁷² For an extensive study, see Elena Cassin, "Le roi et le lion," 355–401.

²⁷³ [*il-tab-bi*]-*iš maš-ki lab-bi-im-ma i-rap-pu-ud* EDIN (Gilg VII.145); Parpola, *The Standard Babylonian Epic*, 97; George, *Epic of Gilgamesh*, 59: "After you are gone his hair will be matted in mourning, [clad] in the skin of a lion, he will wander the [wild]"; cf. CAD L, 24. See also Gilg X.46, 53. Though these texts are obviously from epic literature, Gilgamesh was thought to be an actual, historical person who ruled Uruk sometime between 2800–2500 (see Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989], 40). As for his leonine mourning clothes, it may be that the lion skin is the only and last vestige of Gilgamesh's kingship as he wanders, distraught over Enkidu's demise.

²⁷⁴ ANET, 585. Cf. also Lewis, "CT 13.33–34," 42 and n. 106. He translates *ushumgal* as "dragon." For the lion in Sumerian literature, see further Heimpel, *Tierbilder in der sumerischen Literatur*, 280–344.

²⁷⁵ ANET, 585, 586, respectively (emphasis there).

²⁷⁶ Lewis, "CT 13.33–34," 42. See Heimpel, *Tierbilder*, 295–96.

frequency among, and is further developed by, the Assyrian kings.²⁷⁷ Adad-narari II (911–891) praises himself:

I am king, I am lord, I am powerful, I am important, I am praiseworthy, I am magnificent, I am strong, I am mighty, I am fierce, I am enormously radiant, I am a hero, I am a warrior, I am a virile lion, I am foremost, I am exalted, I am raging.²⁷⁸

Ashurnasirpal II (883–859) uses nearly identical language (including the stative/predicative construction *labb%ku* “I am a lion”): “I am king, I am lord, I am praiseworthy, I am exalted, I am important, I am magnificent, I am foremost, I am a hero, I am a warrior, I am a lion, and I am virile.”²⁷⁹ Later examples are equally militaristic. Sargon II (721–705), for instance, “set in motion the mighty armies of Aššur, and, raging like a lion, set out to conquer” enemy lands.²⁸⁰ Victorious, he marches through such lands “proudly, like a raging, terror-laden lion.”²⁸¹ So, similarly, his successor, Sennacherib (704–681) who raged like a lion (*labbiš*) upon hearing news of Merodach-baladan’s coalition against him. Sennacherib’s subsequent response is equally leonine: “I became rampant like a lion, raging like a storm.”²⁸² Esarhaddon (680–669), too, is a raging lion: “I became as angry as a lion, my mood became furious.”²⁸³ Esarhaddon can, in fact, be defined as the “raging lion, who avenged his own father.”²⁸⁴

In light of this fairly extensive literary usage—in the Neo-Assyrian empire particularly—Cornelius thinks it “remarkable that the Assyrian kings are nowhere depicted as lions or with lions, the only examples being lion-decorations on their chariots or swords...while this is quite common in Egyptian art.”²⁸⁵ Reasons for this absence—and Cornelius’ statement here does not account for reliefs depicting the Assyrian king in the royal lion hunt, the

²⁷⁷ Note *TDOT*, 1:380; G. Johannes Botterweck, “Gott und Mensch in den alttestamentlichen Löwenbildern,” in *Wort, Lied und Gottesspruch: Festschrift für Joseph Ziegler* (2 vols.; ed. Josef Schreiner; Würzburg: Echter, 1972), 1:125; and David Marcus, “Animal Similes in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions,” *Or* 46 (1977): 87.

²⁷⁸ *šar-ra-ku be-la-ku geš- ra-ku kab-ta-ku na-da-ku šur-ru-j a-ku dan-na-ku dan-dan-na-ku aš-ja-ku na-mur-ra-ku ü šur-ba-ku ur-ša-na- ku qar-ra(?) -da(?) -ku (?) lab-ba-ku ü zi-ka-ra-ku a-ša-re-da-ku i-ra- ku šit-mu-ra-ku*, RIMA 2:147 (A.0.99.2) lines 14–15.

²⁷⁹ *MAN-ku be-la-ku na-a-da-ku MAe-ku DUGUD-ku šur-ru-j a-ku SAG.KAL-ku ur-ša-na-ku qar-ra-da-ku lab-ba-ku u zi-ka-ra-ku*; RIMA 2:195–96 (A.0.101.1) i.32–33a; cf. also *TDOT*, 1:380; *CAD L*, 25.

²⁸⁰ *ina uggat libbiya umm%nt Aššur gapš%ti adk%ma labbiš annadirma ana kaš%d m%nti šätina aštakan pan%ya*; *CAD L*, 23; cf. *TDOT*, 1:380.

²⁸¹ *K%ma labbi nadri ša puluj tu ramü etelliš attallakma*; *CAD L*, 24; *TDOT*, 1:380. Note also *AHw* 1:526 for an inscription (*labbi nadri-te*) on a picture of a lion.

²⁸² *la-ab-biš annadirma allabib ab-biš*; *CAD L*, 7 and 23; cf. *ARAB*, 2:129–30 (§§258–259).

²⁸³ *la-ab-bi-iš annadirma i%arij kabatt%;* *CAD L*, 23.

²⁸⁴ *lab-bu nadru mut%r gimil abi %idišu*; *CAD L*, 25; see also *AHw* 1:526.

²⁸⁵ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 59.

royal seal,²⁸⁶ and, perhaps, the lion with the throne in the broken painting from Til Barsip—are not forthcoming, though one can always speculate. Perhaps the answer is simply that such a depiction has yet to be found. Alternatively, the lacuna can plausibly be explained as resulting from the iconographical and ideological differences between Egypt and Assyria on perspectives regarding kingship. Still further, perhaps the monarch-as-lion in the Neo-Assyrian period is purposefully and mostly (but not exclusively, see §§4.2.2 and 4.3.1 above) restricted to serving as a device of literature—more specifically, of royal inscriptions. This might explain why it is missing from the artistic repertoire. If such were the case, the motif would be limited in use and in dissemination to the *literati*. While this is possible, one should not neglect the extensive Neo-Assyrian evidence for the royal lion hunt and royal seal discussed in §4.3.1.²⁸⁷ Whatever the exact explanation, it is again not surprising to find that the monarch-as-lion metaphor is not restricted to Egyptian and Mesopotamian royal rhetoric. Other regions also bear witness to the use of the metaphor. The most extensive collection is found among the Hittites.

4.3.2.3. *Hatti*.²⁸⁸ In Hatti, as in Egypt and Mesopotamia, the king-as-lion metaphor is used in royal inscriptions, specifically in annalistic literature describing military victories. According to Billie Jean Collins, it is the only simile so used in Hittite sources.²⁸⁹ In the description of Hattusili I's (1650–1620) second Syrian campaign he states:

within a few days I cross[ed] the Ceyhan Rive[r] and overthrew(?) *æaššuwa* like a lion wi[th] (its) paws. [W]hen I struck [it], I moved [dust over it], and [a]ll [its] goods(?) I took up and filled [up] *æattuša* (with them).²⁹⁰

And again:

like a lion I kept *æaj i u* at bay and destroyed Zippašna, and its gods I took up and took them to the Sun Goddess of Arinna.²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ See Winter, “*Le Palais imaginaire*,” 59 for the opinion that the seal references the king “as powerful lion, equal to his formidable opponent.”

²⁸⁷ Note also the seal of a lion with an inscription, which probably belongs to Adad-narari III (Parker, “Seals and Seal Impressions,” 38–39 and Pl. XXII, 1 [ND. 7104]). The motif was also known at Ugarit. See the earlier seal of Niqmaddu, also with a lion on it: Claude F.-A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica III: Sceaux et cylindres hittites, épée gravée du cartouche de Mineptah, tablettes Chypre-minoennes et autres découvertes nouvelles de Ras Shamra* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1956), 78.

²⁸⁸ An excellent overview of the Hittite material can be found in Billie Jean Collins, “*æattušili I, The Lion King*,” *JCS* 50 (1998): 15–20.

²⁸⁹ Collins, “*æattušili I*,” 15. So also Harry A. Hofner, Jr., “Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: The Hittites,” *Or* 49 (1980): 297.

²⁹⁰ Collins, “*æattušili I*,” 15 and n. 4 (*KBo* 10.2 ii 17–23); cf. Bryce, *Kingdom of the Hittites*, 82). Note the Akkadian bilingual: “like a lion the great king crossed the river Euphrates, like a lion he destroyed (?) *Haššu* with his paw” (ĪD *Pu-ra-an ki-i-ma* UR.MA₆ LUGAL.GAL *it-te-ti-iq* URU *æa-aš-su-wa ki-i-ma* UR.MA₆ *i-na ri-it-ti-šu <<iš-ta(!)-pā-ak-šu...*; *KBo* 10.1 obv. 34–36; Collins, “*æattušili I*,” 15–16 n. 4; cf. *CAD* N/2, 195).

Bryce's assessment of this imagery—that of “a lion pouncing upon his prey and destroying it without mercy”—as “an image of ruthless savagery against a persistently defiant enemy,” is equally applicable to the Egyptian and Assyrian exemplars.²⁹² In fact, there may be a relationship of sorts insofar as Bryce connects the second Syrian campaign largely to an ideology of kingship that drove Hattusili I to try to surpass all predecessors, even the legendary warrior-king Sargon.²⁹³ Be that as it may, this use of the lion image is firmly entrenched among Hittite kings; indeed, it was already used by Anitta in the early colony period (first two centuries of the second millennium) and later becomes “a regular symbol of Hittite royal power.”²⁹⁴ As evidence of this latter point, mention might be made of Mursili II's (1321–1295) prayer, where the image is applied to the land of Hatti as a whole: “For of old the Land of Hatti with the help of the Sun Goddess of Arinna used to rage against the surrounding lands like a lion.”²⁹⁵ By the time of Hattusili III (1267–1237), the self-designation of the king as a lion has become almost nonchalant: “why do the people of Turira sniff at(?) the gift of me, the lion?”²⁹⁶

To summarize the discussion to this point, the lion is used extensively as a metaphor for royal dominance, especially in violent, militaristic contexts. The lion is not only, therefore, a *threat* that must be overcome by the great monarch in his role as defender; the lion is equally an *ally* insofar as the monarch can appropriate the lion as an image for the royal self. There is an obvious connection between these two aspects: it is the conqueror of the lion who can then claim to have equal, but even greater, strength. But for the most part the inscriptions and images discussed here do not make that connection explicit: Ramesses III is a lion regardless of his lion hunts or his leonine pets. The ambivalent or double-sided nature of the lion *qua* lion image is yet again underscored in this data, but the lion's power as an image also receives equal emphasis.

²⁹¹ Collins, “*Ḫattušili I*,” 15 and n. 4 (*KBo* 10.2 iii 1-5; cf. Bryce, *Kingdom of the Hittites*, 82). For the Akkadian version, *KBo* 10.1 rev. 2-4, see Collins, “*Ḫattušili I*,” 15-16 n. 4.

²⁹² Bryce, *Kingdom of the Hittites*, 87.

²⁹³ Ibid. Collins believes that, of the Hittite kings, only Hattusili I “systematically identified himself with the lion and that he did so deliberately as a means of solidifying his political position” (“*Ḫattušili I*,” 15). She also thinks that Hattusili borrowed this imagery from the Hattic pantheon, specifically the weather god Waššezzi who is called a “lion-king” (UR.MA^æ LUGAL-*uš*, *ibid.*, 19-20 and n. 27).

²⁹⁴ Bryce, *Kingdom of the Hittites*, 87; on Anitta and the early colony period, see *ibid.*, 39-43; Collins, “*Ḫattušili I*,” 17 and n. 13; *idem*, “Animals in Hittite Literature,” 250.

²⁹⁵ Bryce, *Kingdom of the Hittites*, 104; Collins, “*Ḫattušili I*,” 18 and n. 20.

²⁹⁶ Collins, “*Ḫattušili I*,” 17 and n. 17 (*KBo* 1.14 obv. 18'-19'; cf. Bryce, *Kingdom of the Hittites*, 303). The threatening undertones of the image in light of the broader context should not be overlooked. See Collins, “*Ḫattušili I*,” 17-18 for alternative understandings of the lion metaphor here, which, in my judgment, do not obviate the underlying threat.

4.3.2.4. *Lions and/on Symbols for Royalty.* The appropriation of lion imagery by monarchs in various times and places in the Near East was not limited to royal inscriptions or hunting reliefs. That appropriation was also felt in the varieties of use that the lion image was put to in other royal contexts. A few examples must suffice: These include the lion-head decorations on such items as Ramesses III's ships at Medinet Habu (**fig. 4.102**), as well as depictions of shields with lion heads on reliefs from Nimrud (**fig. 4.160**) and Zinjirli (**fig. 4.161**, rear of chariot; cf. **fig. 4.160**). As already noted, Ramesses II's war chariot is also decorated with a lion (**fig. 4.101**), and, in this case, the lion has a human head in its mouth.

Perhaps the most obvious instance of the appropriation of the lion in the royal iconographical repertoire is the use of the lion on or with thrones, whether the lions are presented in complete or partial (e.g., with lion feet) fashion or whether they are simply depicted as accompanying the throne. This is especially common in Egypt (**figs. 4.162–166**) but occurs elsewhere as well, including thrones from locales and periods as discrete as Anatolia (**fig. 4.167**) and the Achaemenid empire (**fig. 4.168**).²⁹⁷

To be sure, one should not make too much of lion feet on thrones or other types of furniture. At times the motif is probably purely decorative and occurs largely for stylistic reasons without carrying significant interpretive weight in and of itself. Even so, the fact that it is a *leonine motif* that became stylized in this fashion is not unimportant nor without bearing on the prevalence and meaning of the lion image when it is connected with royalty and royal figures.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, there are a number of objects from Egypt that apparently belonged to the throne dais, which quite unambiguously highlight the militaristic and violent tenor of the lion image and which do so in connection with the royal throne. These faience lion figures (**figs. 4.169–170**) have flat unglazed backs, leading Hayes to posit that “it is probable that they were attached as ornaments to the newel posts at the bottoms of the dais stairways” (see **fig. 4.171** for a reconstruction).²⁹⁹ The statues show a lion, sitting upright on its haunches, biting the head of a kneeling foreign captive chieftain, whom it holds between its paws. The inscription on **fig. 4.170** reads: “Says the wretched [fallen] chief of Kush, ‘The breath of life!’” while the lion

²⁹⁷ See the extensive study by Martin Metzger, *Königsthron und Gottesthron: Thronformen und Throndarstellungen in Ägypten und im Vorderen Orient im dritten und zweiten Jahrtausend vor Christus und deren Bedeutung für das Verständnis von Aussagen über den Thron im Alten Testament* (2 vols.; AOAT 15/1-2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), especially 1:10-13, 44-45, 68-82, 246-51, 316-17, as well as the many images in Volume 2 (e.g., Taf. 4-5, 31, etc.). Note also the Achaemenid-style throne found at Samaria with lion feet (**fig. 3.126**). For lions on thrones of divinities, see §4.4.2 below.

²⁹⁸ Annie Caubet speaks of such objects becoming, after the addition of lion parts at appropriate positions, “a sort of metaphorical lion, no longer an inanimate object but the image of a living creature” (“Animals in Syro-Palestinian Art,” in Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World*, 223).

²⁹⁹ Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 2:336; see also 2:334.

itself has cartouches with the praenomen and nomen of Ramesses II on the right and left shoulders, respectively.³⁰⁰ The message is thus blatant and powerful: the leontomorphic pharaoh devours the defeated foreign enemy. The earlier (probably Dynasty 12), upright heraldic lion from Thebes that grasps the head of kneeling captive is comparable (**fig. 4.172**).³⁰¹ Hayes comments:

It has been suggested that these standing figures, which are similar to those engraved on amuletic knives of ivory...portray a lion daemon or divinity; but it seems more likely that, as in Old Kingdom temple reliefs and numerous monuments of the New Kingdom, the lion mauling or biting a fallen enemy either symbolizes the king or represents the actual lion which fought beside him in battle.³⁰²

On the basis of the Dynasty 19 examples, it would seem that the lion-as-king option is not only best, it is highly probable—indeed, certain in the case of **fig. 4.170**. If so, earlier examples would join the later ones in portraying the king as a lion in such a fashion that royal power, ferocity, danger, and dominance are inescapable. The examples from Ramesses II, moreover, do all of this *within the context of the royal throne*.

The lion as an image of royalty also occurs in less militant contexts. An example would be various Assyrian bronze lion weights, often with bilingual (Aramaic and Akkadian) inscriptions. These weights (see **figs. 4.173–175**), which come in different sizes depending on their quantities, date to the time of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727), Shalmaneser V (726–722), Sargon II (721–705), and Sennacherib (704–681). The royal names are often included in the inscription.³⁰³ Even when the royal name is absent, the standard is often specified as “of the king,” indicating that these weights were royal or represented the royal standard.³⁰⁴ The choice of the lion as the form of these weights could be arbitrary, but in my judgment Van Buren is correct when she states that their leonine form is probably due to the lion-as-image-of-royalty notion.³⁰⁵ Other kings also used the lion as a royal device in different contexts and on disparate media: Esarhaddon (680–669) engraved a lion on an alabaster

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 2:336.

³⁰¹ There are actually three other statues with the lion in the same position but only one preserves the foreign captive. The former three are from Dynasty 12 (Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 1:225).

³⁰² Ibid., 1:225.

³⁰³ E.g., **fig. 4.173** reads: “Palace of Shalmaneser, king of Assyia, two-thirds of a mina of the king” in Akkadian, and in Aramaic “Two-thirds [mina] of the land” (C. B. F. Walker in *Art and Empire*, 193). **Fig. 4.174** is inscribed in Akkadian “Palace of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, five mina of the king,” and twice in Aramaic “five mina of the land” and “five mina of the king.” **Fig. 4.175** reads in Akkadian “Palace of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, one-fifth of a mina of the king,” and in Aramaic “One-fifth.” See also Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira, 1998), 208 n. 25; Van Buren, *Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 6.

³⁰⁴ Van Buren, *Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 6.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

vase “to mark it as his property,” while Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562) stamped the lion on building bricks.³⁰⁶

The materials discussed above highlight the close, indeed inextricable, association of the monarch/mighty one with the lion—particularly in its dual, distinct-yet-related manifestations as a threat to be encountered/defeated and as a victorious power to be allied with and appropriated.

4.3.3. *Lion, Metaphor, and (Sympathetic) Magic*

It is probably the lion-as-victor motif that underlies what might be best, though simplistically, called the sympathetic-magical use of the lion. There are at least two main ways the lion figure is employed in this fashion: 1) linguistically, in the giving of proper names (PNs) relating to the lion; and 2) decoratively, in the use of the lion as an artistic device on various types of weapons, including the ceremonial variety.³⁰⁷

4.3.3.1. *Proper Names (PNs)*. The PNs can be dealt with briefly. As with the PNs discussed in Chapters 2 (§2.3.1), 3 (§3.7), and Appendix 1, the use of leonine terms in or as PNs probably reflects a wish on the part of the giver that the owner bear leonine qualities. (The same may hold for many West Semitic stamp seals containing lion images; see **figs. 4.176–186**.)³⁰⁸ Such PNs occur in virtually every language attested in the Near East. A few examples follow:

- Akkadian: *La-ba-kašid*, *Šî-la-ba*, *Si-la-ba-at*, ^d*Ši-la-bàt/ba-at*, *Ištar-la-ba*, etc.³⁰⁹
- Amorite: *Su-mu-la-ba*; *Ša-du-um-la-bu-a*.³¹⁰

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ A third example might be the broader use of the lion as a metaphor for various entities—including human, animal, and various inanimates. E.g.: *dogs* “whose attack is as fierce as a lion’s” (*ša kama UR.MAœ dîn tibûšur*; CAD N/2, 196); an *eagle* that gains strength like a roaring lion (*kama ni-ši-im n%lêri*; CAD N/2, 196); the *snake*, which in Gilg XI.306 is called the “lion of the ground” (UR.MAœ *šā qaq-qa-ri*; Parpola, *Standard Babylonian Epic*, 113; cf. CAD N/2, 197), and elsewhere roars like a lion (*kama UR.MAœ irmumu*; CAD N/2, 196) in a house; *arrows* that are like a merciless lion (*šiltajaka ezzu UR.MA[œ la g%milu*; CAD N/2, 196) or that go like a lion (*kama ni-ši-im iz al%ka*; CAD N/2, 196); a *heroic heart* “full of fearsome[ness] like a lion” (*libba qarr%d kama UR.MAœ mali pulu_j[tu]*; CAD N/2, 196); a *judge* who roars like a lion (*lissā eliša*; CAD N/2, 196).

³⁰⁸ See the related discussion and similar seals in Chapter 3 (§3.6; **figs. 3.145–156**).

³⁰⁹ See *AHw* 1:526; CAD L, 25; and further below under the lion and the deity, especially Ištar (§§4.4.2 and 4.4.3.2).

³¹⁰ See Herbert Bardwell Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts: A Structural and Lexical Study* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 56, 59, 225, who takes the PNs as nominal constructions: perhaps “name/posterity of the lion” (or: “of Labba”) and “mountain/refuge of the lion” (or: “of Labba”). Huffmon also notes I-din-^dLa-ba in ARM 9:253 iii.17.

- Ugaritic: *lbš* and *lbit* in the alphabetic cuneiform PNs *š mlbu*,³¹¹ *š bdlbit*, (*bn*) *š mlbu/i*;³¹² and *la-ab-šī-ya*, *bin-la-ba-bi* in syllabic texts.³¹³
- Egyptian: *Rbī*.³¹⁴
- Phoenician: *kpr* (see **figs. 4.187–188**; cf. **fig. 3.159**).³¹⁵

Several of these names are explicitly theophoric and, as such, may have less to do with the bearer of the name than the deity (or deities) invoked in the leonine designation. Consequently, they would belong in the section dealing with the lion and the deity below (§4.4.3). But, whatever the specifics regarding the PNs, there can be little doubt about the sympathetic-magical use of the lion at work in various weapons.

³¹¹ Stanislav Segert, *A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language: With Selected Texts and Glossary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 44 translates this PN as “Uncle of Lion.” But see C. L. Seow, “Am,” in *DDD*, 24–26. On the basis of Seow’s discussion, the PN is better translated “The Lion is my Kin” with “Lion” here a DN or an epithet used as such. A less likely alternative would be “(the god) *šAm* is a Lion.”

³¹² See F. Thureau-Dangin, “Une tablette bilingue de Ras Shamra,” *RA* 37 (1940–1941): 97–118, who thinks the lioness-goddess in question is Ishtar, comparing the PNs from the Mari letters and the Cappadocian texts (see the Akkadian and Amorite PNs above). He translates the Ugaritic PN as “Le-nom-(divin)-est-Lionne” (117 n. 10). Cf. also *lbiy* in *KTU* 4.376 and *bn lbiy* in 4.780 line 1. For *šAmmt* in *KTU* 1.6 ii.20, see Appendix 1. There is considerable debate over whether *šAm* in this word means “lion” (but note *NERT*, 218 takes it as “the lovely field of the lion Mamit [?]” and that *WUS*, 303 states that “[d]er ‘Löwe der Mametu’ ist in der akk. Myth. Nergal”; contrast Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 134: “shore of death” and *ANET*, 140: “Shihlmemat-field”). Note also *ary*, which *WUS*, 33 takes as a gentilic of *ar* (see further below). Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 531, comments that, in general, Ugaritic theophoric names in which the name of a deity is combined with an animal are rare.

³¹³ For the Ugaritic materials see Frauke Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit* (Studia Pohl 1; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967), 105 and 154.

³¹⁴ William A. Ward, “Comparative Studies in Egyptian and Ugaritic,” *JNES* 20 (1961): 35 states that this PN, from a Dynasty 18 text, is actually Syrian. The PN itself “can be none other than the Semitic divine name *Lbu*, another name for the god *šAmtar*.” See also the PN in Richard D. Hess, *Amarna Personal Names* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), 103.

³¹⁵ See Appendix 1. Larry G. Herr, *The Scripts of Ancient Northwest Semitic Seals* (HSM 18; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 180 dates the seal from Tyre (**fig. 4.187**) to the 5th century. *CWSSS*, 410 (#1086) dates the script to the 8th–7th century, but is uncertain whether it is Phoenician, Aramaic, or Ammonite (so also on #1087; **fig. 4.188**). Note also the Phoenician and Punic PNs *lbš* (*CIS*, 147.5), *lby* (*CIS*, 803, 3483), and *lbt* (*CIS*, 470, 2074, 3833), though all of these could be gentilics meaning “Libyan” (see Frank L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions: A Catalog, Grammatical Study and Glossary of Elements* [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972], 337–38, 133; and Appendix 1). Yoshi Muchiki, “The Unidentified God *PMY* in Phoenician Texts,” *JSS* 36 (1991): 7–10, has argued that the theophoric element *pmi*, which appears in Phoenician and Punic PNs, should be related to Egyptian *p3-m3i* (“the lion”).

4.3.3.2. *Ceremonial Weapons.* Ceremonial weapons decorated with lions occur very early. From Early Dynastic Lagash comes the mace-head of Mesilim, king of Kish (**fig. 4.189**), and the monumental bronze spearhead (**fig. 4.190**), that may also stem from this king.³¹⁶ From the same period comes the mace-head with four lion heads sculpted in the round found at Tell Agrab (**fig. 4.191**).³¹⁷ Somewhat later in the third millennium is Gudea's mace-head in the shape of a lion (**fig. 4.192**).³¹⁸ A mace from a Dynasty 12 (early second millennium) cemetery at Lisht shows that the lion-mace was not unknown in Middle Kingdom Egypt, though here it is the claws of the lion that are highlighted.³¹⁹

The mace is not the only weapon where the lion makes its presence felt. Swords and daggers also carry the lion image, especially on their pommels or hilts (**figs. 4.193–195**)³²⁰ and sheaths (**fig. 4.196**). The examples from Saqqara (**fig. 4.193**) and Byblos (**fig. 4.196**) recount a type of hunting narrative—one that the owner perhaps hoped would be replayed in real life. Lions are also frequently found on axe-heads; in these cases the blade is often depicted as coming out of the lion's (or lions') mouth(s) (**figs. 4.197–198**).

Defensive weaponry is also connected with the lion in certain contexts. From the tomb of Ramesses III comes a coat of mail with lions embroidered on it (**fig. 4.199**).³²¹ The palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad contained a relief depicting warriors with shields with lion-head bosses at the sack of the temple at Muṣaṣir on the border of Urartu, ca. 714 (**fig. 4.200**; cf. **figs. 4.160–161**).³²²

Finally, one notes that the power of the lion was open to uses beyond the violent and militaristic, despite the predominance of those themes. The lion is among those animals used, for instance, in Mesopotamian potency

³¹⁶ Anton Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia: The Classical Art of the Near East* (London: Phaidon, 1969), 28.

³¹⁷ Van Buren, *Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 4, argues from the inscriptions on some of these objects that the lion may have been here less a symbol for the king than for the deity.

³¹⁸ See *ANET*, 269 for inscriptions discussing Gudea's lion maces.

³¹⁹ Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 1:283.

³²⁰ Cf. the piece in Hans G. Güterbock, "A Votive Sword with Old Assyrian Inscription," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on his Seventy-fifth Birthday, April 21, 1965* (AS 16; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 197–98 and Pls. XIII–XV, which may be dedicated to Nergal.

³²¹ Note that Amenanen, high priest of Heliopolis and second prophet of Amun under Amenhotep III is pictured with a lion (or leopard?) cloak (Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 297).

³²² Note the inscription from Sargon II, which describes some shields as follows: "the heads of ferocious lions protrude from their centers" (*qaqqad lab-bi nadr-te ʾurruššin aʾūnimma*; CAD L, 25). Note also the later Sasanian disk (4th century AD/CE) with protruding lion-head that may be just such a shield-boss (Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 189).

incantations.³²³ Even here, however, the power of the animal receives due attention and is probably its major contribution to such contexts.

4.4. THE LION AND THE GODS

As this chapter has already had occasion to show, monarchs are not the only ones to associate with lions, whether that relationship be antagonistic or amenable. Various deities throughout the ancient Near East were also depicted as encountering/fighting lions, with leonine familiars, and/or as lions. Each of these rubrics is treated below in turn, though the extensive nature of the evidence dictates that the treatments be representative not exhaustive.³²⁴

4.4.1. *The God(s) Fighting/Encountering the Lion*

In this first category mention must again be made of the ubiquitous contest scenes and the so-called “master of beasts” motif (see, e.g., **figs. 4.201–207**).³²⁵ In the earlier periods it is not always clear whom the anthropomorphic figure represents—that is, whether it is a god (and, if so, *which* god) or a mortal—though the use of the monarch in these presentations becomes increasingly demonstrable in later periods, especially the Persian Period (see above).³²⁶ Perhaps this later “clarification” ought to be understood as evidence that the earlier presentations depict *deities* clashing with the lion. Keel has made a strong case that this is, in fact, the situation for the cylinder seals of the third millennium, though he has appropriately refrained from identifying the figures portrayed there with specific deities known from later textual sources.³²⁷

The divine status of many of these figures is clear given certain iconographical details: the presence of horned crowns (e.g., **fig. 4.202**); the portrayal of the figure as a composite bull-man (e.g., **figs. 4.201, 4.208**); the sitting of the figure on a throne (sometimes made of lions) or standing on lions

³²³ See Robert D. Biggs, *ŠA.ZI.GA: Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations* (TCS 2; Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin, 1967). E.g., text no. 6:1-5 (LKA 102:1-5): “Incantation. Get excited! Get excited! Get an erection! [Get an erection]! Get excited like a stag! Get an erection lik[e a wild bull]! Let a lio[n] get an erection along with you! Let a [...] get an erection along with you! Let a sna[ke](?) get an erection along with you!” (ÉN UG.GA UG.GA *ti-ba* [*ti-ba*] UG.GA GIM *a-a-li ti-ba* GI[M *ri-m*] *it-ti-ka lit-ba-a ni-e-š*ū(?) *it-ti-ka lit-ba-a x* [*x* (*x*)] *it-ti-ka lit-ba-a* MU[Š (*x x*)]); Biggs, *ŠA.ZI.GA*, 22). Cf. also no. 10 line 34 (STT 280 iii.34) where the man is addressed as “Lion! Bull!(?)” (UR.MAœ *lu-u*; Biggs, *ŠA.ZI.GA*, 27). As these citations reveal, the lion is not the only animal used for this particular purpose.

³²⁴ Cf. the comments of Botterweck, “Gott und Mensch,” 125; *TDOT*, 1:379-80; and Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 59.

³²⁵ See Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*, 86-125, for the motif.

³²⁶ In later periods similar depictions often portray the god La₁mu (“Hairy”). See Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 115 and 114 fig. 91.

³²⁷ Othmar Keel, “Die Deutung der Tierkampfszenen,” 1-59. See also Lambert, “Sumerian Gods.” Cf. *ANEP*, 333.

(**fig. 4.209**);³²⁸ the addition of wings to the anthropomorphic figure; or various other contextual clues (see, e.g., **figs. 4.210–211**). The winged figure is often found battling or restraining the lion in various regions and media, including Nuzi (**fig. 4.212**), Tell Halaf (**fig. 4.213**), and Cyprus (**fig. 4.214**). This figure is even found on a depiction of the embroidered tunic of Ashurnasirpal (**fig. 4.215**).³²⁹

The last image reveals a key connection between the god who encounters the lion and the king who does the same: it is because the gods conquer lions that their representatives, the monarchs, can (and must) conquer them as well. At the very least, the monarch's triumph over the lion is shown to have divine connotations given the god-vs.-lion tradition—a point already discussed in detail earlier. Such a judgment receives further support by noting that this god-vs.-lion tradition has a long and broad history. There are, that is, *many* deities, not just the anonymous bull-man, naked hero, or winged genie, that are found *tête-à-tête* with the lion.³³⁰

On the seal of Ini-Teshub from thirteenth-century Carchemish, a god mounted on a bull vanquishes a lion with a spear (**fig. 4.216**). Keel has argued that this depiction represents the victory of the storm god over the lion (perhaps of the?) god Mot.³³¹ This suggestion is possible, especially as Mot is compared to a ravenous lion in the Baal Cycle (see §4.4.3.4), but the identification must remain tentative, especially if the Carchemish seal is more Hittite than Canaanite in its religious thought-world.³³² The identification of the protagonist as the storm god is, however, probably correct, as another object from Carchemish depicts the storm god in this same attitude: dispatching a lion with the assistance of a helper (**fig. 4.217**).

Not all depictions are quite so violent as **fig. 4.217**. There are a number of Egyptian stelae, for instance, that portray Horus, either as a child or as Shed, the “savior,”³³³ carrying a lion by the tail (along with other dangerous animals). Shed is portrayed on two such stelae from the time of Ramesses II in Dynasty

³²⁸ This image is evidence that it was not only male deities who were “masters of beasts.” Other examples of the goddess in this pose with lions are found in a Syrian seal from Ebla (ca. 2400-2250; see Othmar Keel, *Deine Blicke sind Tauben: Zur Metaphorik des Hohen Liedes* [SBS 114/115; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1984], Abb. 17) and an ivory pyxis (Northsyrian?) from Nimrud (9th/8th century; *ibid.*, Abb. 25).

³²⁹ See Joan Oates, *Babylon* (rev. ed.; London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), figs. 87-88 for Neo-Babylonian seals with similar presentations.

³³⁰ The god-encountering/fighting-lion motif continued into the very late periods. See Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, fig. 99.

³³¹ Othmar Keel, “Conceptions religieuses dominantes en Palestine/Israël entre 1750 et 900,” in *Congress Volume: Paris 1992* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 61; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 130; *idem*, *Studien III*, 192-94. Cf. the bull-over-lion motif—a relatively rare depiction—in **figs. 3.54-55, 4.49-51**.

³³² So Woolley, *Art of the Middle East*, 145-46.

³³³ Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*, 148; *idem*, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 352-53; *idem*, *Das Recht der Bilder*, 223. See further H. Brunner, “Sched,” in *LÁ* 5:547-49.

19 from Deir el-Medineh (**figs. 4.218–219**).³³⁴ Horus the child (Harpokrates) is depicted quite similarly in several late stelae dating from the 7th century onward (e.g., **fig. 4.220**).³³⁵ Here the lion is but one of the dangerous creatures subdued and controlled by Horus.

A stela from Marathus (ḥAmrit) in northern Phoenicia (**fig. 4.221**) is not unrelated and perhaps roughly contemporaneous with the last-mentioned piece, though the exact date is debated.³³⁶ The piece bears evidence of Egyptian and Hittite influence but, unfortunately, the Phoenician inscription is badly weathered.³³⁷ The god in the stela rides on a lion that in turn strides upon a mountain design. In the god's left hand he holds another lion by its hind legs while in his right he grasps a weapon in the smiting posture.³³⁸ The identification of the deity in question is uncertain; perhaps the inscription once identified him.³³⁹ Also uncertain is whether the god intends to strike the lion he holds in his left hand or if this is simply the stereotypical smiting-god pose.³⁴⁰ What is certain, however, is that "[h]ere the lion has a double meaning: the enthronement on the lion reflects the power and vitality of the chthonic god and the subdued lion [reflects] the 'Herr der Tiere' motif."³⁴¹ Again, there is a close relationship between these two aspects: the deity is able to ride upon a lion only because the deity is more powerful than the lion and because the deity is able to, and perhaps already has previously, subdued and defeated it. One might note at this point the fact that Gudea installs a lion in Ninurta's

³³⁴ Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 409. This same deity is portrayed in a chariot hunting a lion (and other dangerous beasts) in an Iron Age Egyptian seal (Shuval in *Studien III*, 78 fig. 022).

³³⁵ For additional examples, see Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*, Taf. VII; idem, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, Pl. XXVIII; *ABAT2*, Abb. 569. Both *ABAT2* (162) and Keel (*Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*, 148; *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, Pl. XXVIII) compare Ps 91:13.

³³⁶ Cf. *ABAT2*, 88: "9. Jahrh. (?)" ; Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, fig. 731: 6th century; *ANEP*, 306: no later than 6th-5th century.

³³⁷ See *ABAT2*, 88; cf. also *ANEP*, 306.

³³⁸ Some scholars have commented on the "small" size of the lion that the deity holds (e.g., Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 63; *ANEP*, 306). But, as with figures holding lions from Dur-Sharrukin and Persepolis, the size of the lion is relative: the size of the *deity* is probably what is being stressed (cf. **fig. 4.89**). In the case of the Amrit stela, the lion familiar is larger than the lion the deity grasps; perhaps this is to stress the supernatural nature of the lion mount (see §4.4.2 below).

³³⁹ Donald Harden, *The Phoenicians* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1971), 182 thinks it is Baal. *ANEP*, 306: "[a] god." *ABAT2*, 88: "Phönikischer Gebirgsgott." Some have stated that the inscription names the deity as Shadrappa.

³⁴⁰ See Dominique Collon, "The Smiting God: A Study of a Bronze in the Pomerance Collection in New York," *Levant* 4 (1973): 111-34; and cf. also Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Ba'al: Late Bronze and Iron Age I Periods (c 1500-1000 BCE)* (OBO 140; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 1994).

³⁴¹ Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 63.

temple because it is one of Ninurta's war trophies.³⁴² Even the lion mount or lion familiar, that is, may often represent the defeat of the lion. At the very least, the presence of a lion companion implies that the power of the divinity in question is superior to that of this beast. This leads directly into a discussion of the lion as familiar.

4.4.2. *The God(s) with Lion Familiar(s)*

Lions have long been associated with the gods, or, to put it another way, the gods have long been portrayed in the company of these creatures. The connection is extremely broad: so many gods are associated with the lion that it is hardly worth detailing all of them. But the connection also runs deep: Keel has noted that "[r]eferences to leopards and lions as attributes of female deities date back to the neolithic age (seventh/sixth millennium B.C.)."³⁴³ An example of such an early association is the clay figure from Çatal Hüyük (**fig. 4.222**) depicting a seated mother goddess, apparently in the process of giving birth while flanked by two lions.³⁴⁴ But the goddess-lion connection is also well attested in later, historical periods and with many different goddesses—though perhaps in less fecund ways³⁴⁵—preeminently with the warlike Ishtar, for whom the lion was a special pet, indeed, her "dog"!³⁴⁶ But Ishtar, while of special significance, is not alone: the association of various deities with lions was frequently depicted in later periods and in manifold ways, the most popular being the portrayal of a deity on a lion throne and/or as riding on top of a lion. Each of these must be treated, but first a few additional important connections deserve mention. The lion was used as a decorative motif on the twin lion-headed mace (**fig. 4.223**), for instance, which was used as a symbol

³⁴² Lewis, "CT 13.33-34," 42, also n. 104. The text here reads UR, which J. Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978), 145 translated as "lion," but which Lewis prefers to take as a composite lion-dragon.

³⁴³ Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 158.

³⁴⁴ Keel, *Deine Blicke*, 130 opts for panthers. For a recent discussion, see Ann C. Gunter, "Animals in Anatolian Art," in Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World*, 82-83.

³⁴⁵ However, the fertility aspect should not be seen as antithetical to the more militant aspects. Note Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 63 and see further below for the lion with fertility goddesses and, especially, the lion as a symbol of new life, regeneration, and so forth in later periods. For this latter connection, see especially Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*; and Howard M. Jackson, *The Lion Becomes Man: The Gnostic Leontomorphic Creator and the Platonic Tradition* (SBLDS 81; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

³⁴⁶ Cf. CAD N/2, 194: *išgum UR.MAœ kalab Ištar šag%ma la ik[la]*; "the lion, the dog of Ištar, roared and did not st[op (roaring)]." The dog-lion equation is significant for it indicates that the Mesopotamian literature classified lions zoologically, not with felines, but with canines. See B. Landsberger, *Die Fauna des Alten Mesopotamien nach der 14. Tafel der Serie æAR-RA = æUBULLU* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934), 6-11, 75-77; Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 119.

for several deities.³⁴⁷ At other times, a full lion is present, not as an element of a throne or as a mount, but nevertheless as a familiar of some sort. Such is probably the case with the basalt relief from Rujm el-ḥAbd (**fig. 4.224**),³⁴⁸ dated to the 9th or 8th century, or in the much earlier Akkadian seals showing lions on the portals of the mountains whence the sun god rises (see **fig. 4.80**), or striding behind a war deity of some sort (Ninurta?)³⁴⁹ in a similar tableau (**fig. 4.225**).³⁵⁰ These types of depictions were widespread throughout the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean basin, as evidenced from a Cretan stamp seal from the “Palace of Minos” in Knossos, depicting a goddess on a mountaintop flanked by two lions (**fig. 4.226**). The divine familiarity with the lion carried with it interpretive associations, not the least of which is that the gods could use these creatures for punitive action if they so desired.³⁵¹

In my judgment, this potential for harm that the leonine familiar holds is at work—at least implicitly—in all presentations of deities with such beasts.³⁵² Hence, the god’s mastery of the lion represents in part the ability of the deity in question to *withhold or bar* the threat the lion poses to others. But this

³⁴⁷ E. Douglas Van Buren, *Symbols of the Gods in Mesopotamian Art* (AO 23; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1945), 177-78 notes that it is usually thought to be a symbol of Nergal, though other options (e.g., Ninurta) are possible. Ishtar often carries such a mace.

³⁴⁸ Perhaps in Moabite territory. The animal behind the figure with the spear is usually taken as a lion though some have opted for a bird of some sort (see Martin Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* [OBO 169; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 1999], 187 and n. 90). Klingbeil correctly notes that the snout indicates a feline (187). The identity of the deity depicted is debated. E. Warmenbol (“La stèle de Rujm el-ḥAbd [Louvre AO 5055]: Une image de divinité Moabite du IX^{ème}-VIII^{ème} siècle av. n. è,” *Levant* 15 [1983]: 63-75) argued that the deity is Kemoš. Klingbeil, however, has pointed out that the presentation probably follows “in the tradition of Baḥal-Seth the serpent slayer.” Nevertheless, it may be that “we are confronted with the Moabite adaptation of the god with a possible change of designation” (187).

³⁴⁹ For the Ninurta identification, see H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals: A Documentary Essay on the Art and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (London: Gregg Press, 1965), 107. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 79-80, is uncertain.

³⁵⁰ Cf. also *ANEP*, 684, another Akkadian seal showing a lion in context with the sun god. In this seal, the lion is next to a crouching figure underneath the sun god. Frankfort again takes this figure to be Ninurta (*Cylinder Seals*, 102-103). Composite leonine familiars are, of course, also known. For two interesting examples, also on Akkadian seals, see *ANEP*, 686 and Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, fig. 36.

³⁵¹ Note, e.g., Gilg XI.185-86 where Ea scolds Enlil for causing the flood when, instead, a lion could have arisen and diminished the people (*am-ma-ki taš-ku-nu a-bu-ba* UR.MAœ *lit-ba-am-ma* UN.MEŠ *li-ša-aj-jî-ir*, Parpola, *Standard Babylonian Epic*, 111; see George, *Epic of Gilgamesh*, 95, for a translation). Cf. also Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 118.

³⁵² Gunter, “Animals in Anatolian Art,” 87 treats a seal depicting a war god resting his feet on a lion “that seems to have eaten a goat. The lion’s victims may be shown as animal heads, while the god’s victims are rendered in parallel fashion as headless human corpses.” Cf. also **figs. 4.303-304**.

protective element is not to be overemphasized to the neglect of its correlate: the power (and, subsequently, the threat) the divinity holds and represents since that deity is able to move without fear among such beasts, to master them to the point of using them as pets and companions or, even more amazingly, as modes of transportation!³⁵³

Presentations of divinities riding lions as mounts are frequently encountered in the iconographical repertoire of divinity in the ancient Near East. Again, the practice is widespread geographically and chronologically and occurs with both male and female deities. Examples of the former, while perhaps less frequent than the latter, are nevertheless not uncommon.³⁵⁴ Early examples include seals in Mitannian (**fig. 4.227**), Old Syrian (**figs. 4.228–229**), and Hittite styles (**fig. 4.230**), some of which depict the deity holding the lion by a leash or nose-rope (Akkadian *perretu*). Examples from later periods and in different media include a broken clay sculpture in Neo-Assyrian style depicting two gods (though the deity to the left could be a goddess) riding animal mounts, at least one of which is a lion (**fig. 4.231**).³⁵⁵ From Persian Period Tell Defenneh in Egypt comes a stela probably depicting a Semitic god³⁵⁶ who rides on a striding lion (**fig. 4.232**). Indeed, it seems that presentations of male deities on lion mounts are more common for Syria-Palestine and Mesopotamia than they are for Egypt, though Nefertem's frequent association with the lion should not be overlooked.³⁵⁷ Egyptian religion seemed to prefer, in the main—

³⁵³ This powerful mount could be turned against the deity's (or one's own) enemies thus providing a "protection" of another, but related, sort. See, e.g., Hedvig Györy, "Une amulette représentant Néfertoum-sur-le-lion à Budapest," in *Sesto Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia: Atti* (Turin, Italy [?]: n. p., 1992), 1:234–35, who highlights Nefertem-on-the-lion's combative aspects, but also his protective/defending aspects.

³⁵⁴ So also Othmar Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst: Eine neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* (SBS 84/85; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977), 155.

³⁵⁵ For the style of the lion, cf. Ashurbanipal's reliefs discussed above (**figs. 4.120–124, 4.128–130**). The presentation is similar to the procession at Maltaya (**fig. 4.247**), where the figure who rides the lion is a goddess. The same could be the case here for **fig. 4.231** with the first god being Assur on a lion-dragon and the second a goddess on a lion; the image is simply too broken to be certain. However, the size of the piece and other considerations indicate it may have been a model for a larger sculpture not unlike the one preserved at Maltaya. Perhaps *CWSSS* #1057 (seal of *qswšdny* [?] [לִקְטִישְׁדַּנִּי]), a seal that is possibly Edomite, should also be mentioned though Avigad and Sass believe the animal mount here is a bull (*CWSSS*, 393; cf. Ornan, "Mesopotamian Influence," 60 and 61 fig. 28).

³⁵⁶ See *ABAT* 2, 101.

³⁵⁷ See, e.g., Györy, "Une amulette," 1:233–36 and Tav. VI (a piece dateable to Dynasties 26–30, though unfortunately only Nefertem's feet are visible); and Krzysztof Grzymalski, "A Statuette of Nefertem on a Lion," in *Hommages à Jean Leclant* (ed. Catherine Berger, Gisèle Clerc, and Nicolas Grimal; Bibliothèque d'Étude 106/2; Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1994), 2:199–202 (this piece was excavated at Meroe). See also de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 237 n. 13, who gives eight examples; Grzymalski, "A Statuette," 200 n. 3 gives still more—most of which are Ptolemaic. Grzymalski also explores

especially when the lion was associated with the deity in question—zoomorphic presentation of the deities themselves, especially as leontocephalines. Such is not the case with other parts of the ancient Near East, which apparently preferred to present the deities anthropomorphically on lion mounts.³⁵⁸ So, on an Old Babylonian seal, it is probably Nergal who rides the lion (**fig. 4.233**). From the latter half of the second millennium (14th century) comes the well-known “smiting god” on lion mount (**fig. 4.234**). The god in question is probably Baal or Baal-Seth given the weapons, though Hadad-Baal or Reshef are also possibilities.³⁵⁹ A slightly later item—a stela from al-Qadbun dating to 1200–1000—also represents Baal on a striding lion with open maw (**fig. 4.235**).³⁶⁰

Many other pieces may also represent Baal or Baal-Seth or, at the very least, a storm god (**figs. 4.236–238**; perhaps also **fig. 4.239**). Deities representing other phenomena are also associated with the lion, however: these include the sun god and moon god,³⁶¹ both of whom (unusually) ride upon a huge lion on a relief from Carchemish (**fig. 4.240**). On a fascinating gold bowl from twelfth- or eleventh-century Hasanlu, a mountain monster of some sort rides upon a lion similar to the last mentioned (**fig. 4.241**).³⁶² This mountain creature is engaged in a battle with another deity, apparently a weather god,³⁶³ who also partially strides on the lion and who fights the mountain monster with small shields on his hands (cf. **fig. 4.144**).

It is significant to note that the lion in depictions such as these is associated with some of the most important, powerful, and warlike deities around. This is true whether the deity in question is Baal or the war god(s)

connections between Nefertem and Apedemak, the lion god of Meroe (see further note 443 below).

³⁵⁸ Cf. Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 60.

³⁵⁹ See Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, 170. The classic study is Dominique Collon, “The Smiting God,” 111–34. Note especially 119 fig. 4 no. 35 (from Lebanon) and 121 fig. 5 no. 10 (from Anatolia) and 129–30 for a discussion of the lion mount. As for the deity in question, Collon prefers to refer to him generically as the smiting- or weather-god. She tracks the lion element to either Syrian or Anatolian influence (131).

³⁶⁰ See 𐎲𐎠𐎫𐎠𐎡𐎹 𐎲𐎠𐎫𐎠𐎡𐎹, “Eine Stele des Gottes Baal im Museum von Darj-s,” *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 6 (1992): 247–52 who dates it to IA I and places it in the Syrian tradition.

³⁶¹ So Ekrem Akurgal, *The Art of the Hittites* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1962), Pl. 116. René Lebrun, “Le zoomorphisme dans la religion hittite,” in *L’Animal, l’homme, le dieu dans le Proche-Orient Ancien: Actes du Colloque de Cartigny 1981* (ed. Philippe Borgeaud, Yves Christe, and Ivanka Urió; Les Cahiers du Centre d’Étude du Proche-Orient Ancien 2; Leuven: Peeters, 1984), 99 takes the winged divinity to be Ishtar/Shauska, presented in her warrior function and therefore as masculine.

³⁶² For a thorough discussion, see Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, 101–106, who related the bowl in a quite fascinating fashion to the Song of Ullikummi. For the latter, see Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., *Hittite Myths* (2d ed.; ed. Gary M. Beckman; SBLWAW; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 55–65, also 40–42; *ANET*, 121–25.

³⁶³ Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, 103.

Zababa.³⁶⁴ Whichever, the lion is part of the god's sphere and lends its force to the overall presentation of the deity in view.

But the same is equally true for goddesses. Indeed, the lion seems to be more frequently associated with female deities than with male ones. Nowhere is this frequency more apparent than in the case of Ishtar who is often portrayed as standing on a lion.³⁶⁵ Numerous texts state that lions are the symbol of her divinity³⁶⁶ or portray her as the one "who drives seven lions."³⁶⁷ Ishtar—or Inanna as she is called in Sumerian—is a complex figure with a long and involved history.³⁶⁸ She was the major Mesopotamian goddess of (sexual) love and war, not to mention rain, fertility, and the morning/evening star (Venus).³⁶⁹ The finer points of her character and presentation need not derail the discussion; it is enough to note that she is often depicted with a leonine familiar, especially as a mount that she holds by a leash or nose-rope. This type of depiction is as early as Akkadian cylinder seals (**fig. 4.242**), but continues at least through the Neo-Babylonia period. As examples one might compare Old Babylonian cylinder seals (**figs. 4.243–244**)³⁷⁰ as well as the famous painting from the outer wall of the throne room in the palace of Zimri-Lim at Mari (**fig. 4.245**). The Neo-Assyrian seal in **fig. 4.246** is one of the most famous of Near Eastern seals and is simultaneously an excellent example of Ishtar with the lion³⁷¹ in yet later periods.³⁷² Roughly contemporaneous with this seal is the

³⁶⁴ For Zababa, see Lebrun, "Le zoomorphisme dans la religion Hittite," 95-103, especially 99-100; and O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (2d rev. ed.; London: Penguin, 1990), 123.

³⁶⁵ For a summary of Ishtar as lion-goddess, see Wolfgang Fauth, "Ištar als Löwengöttin und die löwenköpfige Lamaštu," *WO* 12 (1981): 21-36.

³⁶⁶ *1 la-ab-ba simat il-tišu i-missu*: "he harnessed for her [Ishtar] the seven lions, symbol of her divinity" (*CAD* L, 24; citing VAB 4 276 iii.31).

³⁶⁷ *ša andati 1 la-ab-bu*: Ishtar of Uruk "who drives seven lions" (*CAD* L, 24, citing VAB 4 274 iii.15; see the related texts in *CAD* L, 24).

³⁶⁸ See T. Abusch, "Ishtar," in *DDD*, 452-56; C. Wilcke and U. Seidl, "Inanna/Ištar," *RLA* 5:74-89; Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 25-73, 135-43; Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 108-109. An excellent collection of the Sumerian material can be found in Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983).

³⁶⁹ Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 60; Abusch, "Ishtar," 452-53.

³⁷⁰ Many more examples could be listed. For a few, see Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna*, figs. 36 (?), 100 (discussion on 185, 195, respectively; cf. also the slightly earlier piece on 102, discussed on 196); Othmar Keel, *Das Böcklein in der Milch seiner Mutter und Verwandtes* (OBO 33; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1980), Abb. 75-77; Silvia Schroer in Othmar Keel, Hildi Keel-Leu, and Silvia Schroer, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel* 2 (OBO 88; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1989), Abb. 032; Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 82c; idem, *Near Eastern Seals*, fig. 34; *ABAT* 2, Abb. 252 (see 77 for discussion); and *ANEP*, 704 (see p. 334 for discussion).

³⁷¹ Given the spots on the animal, some have thought that it may be a leopard (see Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, 194 and n. 113; also Collon, *First Impressions*, 167) or a panther (Keel, *Deine Blicke*, 135). But, despite Klingbeil's reservations, it is the lion that

relief from Maltaya (**fig. 4.247**) depicting a series or procession of deities between two adorants (or one adorant depicted twice).³⁷³ The second deity in the procession is a goddess, holding a ring, seated on a throne that is set on top of a lion. The seventh deity is also a goddess, also holding a ring, but this goddess stands upon a lion. Martin Klingbeil has interpreted the scene as a religious ceremony rather than a portrayal of the pantheon.³⁷⁴ Irrespective of such a judgment, he has also suggested that “some gods portrayed in the scene might be identified as representing the same god or goddess”; if so, the two goddesses are “ideal candidates for Ishtar.”³⁷⁵ One might then posit that the two goddesses are different versions of Ishtar.³⁷⁶ It is, in fact, Ishtar of Arbela that is depicted on a stela from Til Barsip in the same time period, as is made clear by the accompanying inscription (**fig. 4.248**). Finally, there is the notable (for its medium), though unfinished, carved stone relief from the Neo-Babylonian period showing Ishtar on her lion (**fig. 4.249**).

It is obvious that in many of these objects Ishtar is depicted as standing or stepping on the lion more than actually riding on it. This standing or stepping presentation is clearly related to dominance as is demonstrated by other images where Ishtar or other deities step or tread on anthropomorphic victims.³⁷⁷ Yet this posture with Ishtar and the lion also identifies the lion as her special

is Ishtar’s typical attribute animal. Nevertheless, this may be another piece demonstrating that zoological precision in the ancient sources is not to be had insofar as different species of large felines might have been thought to be interchangeable. Of course, it is also the case that lions—especially young ones—often have spotted coats.

- ³⁷² The precise dating is difficult; see Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 171. Most put the piece in the late-eighth century.
- ³⁷³ Note Maltaya, not Malatya in Anatolia. *ANEP*, 315 thinks that the worshipper is “[o]ne of the Sargonids and possibly Sennacherib.”
- ³⁷⁴ Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, 240.
- ³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 240 and n. 238, respectively. There has actually been some debate over the identity of the goddesses. See Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, 174 n. 104; *ABAT2*, 96, and the literature cited there, especially F. Thureau-Dangin, “Les sculptures rupestres de Maltaï,” *RA* 21 (1924): 185-97.
- ³⁷⁶ So *ANEP*, 314-15, which identifies them with Ninlil (Ishtar of Nineveh) and Ishtar. But see Billie Jean Collins, “Animals in the Religions of Anatolia,” in Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World*, 331 for discussions of reliefs from Carchemish and Malatya that depict the goddesses Kubaba and Karhuha, respectively, on lions.
- ³⁷⁷ Cf., e.g., Collon, *Near Eastern Seals*, fig. 11; *idem*, *First Impressions*, fig. 794; *ANEP*, 524 (only in the latter is the deity Ishtar). Note also the occasional presentation with nose rope, which is also found with defeated enemies or captives. Such considerations speak against Catherine Breniquet’s perspective that the idea of a lion mount/stand “can be misleading since the god never violently controls the animal” (“Animals in Mesopotamian Art,” in Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World*, 164). See further Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 50-51 and note the discussion of Ninurta/Ningirsu and Imdugud below (at **fig. 4.278**). Breniquet is certainly right, however, that “the animal is closely related to the god and acts as his substitute....and is part of the essence of the deity” (“Animals in Mesopotamian Art,” 164).

familiar as other deities are often portrayed with other attribute animals.³⁷⁸ Moreover, in the pieces presented thus far, Ishtar is clearly manifest in her warlike aspect; she is typically heavily armed and carries her double-headed lion mace. However, the complex personality of this goddess would warrant against identifying the lion exclusively with her militant aspects. Ishtar was, after all, also a goddess of sex, love, and fertility and these aspects are equally as active in her persona, even simultaneously with her warlike aspects. Klingbeil, for instance, has noted that this odd confluence is present even in the famous Neo-Assyrian seal (**fig. 4.246**):

The image depicts Ishtar on the lion (as a cult image) fully armed worshipped by a female adorant. The palm tree and the intertwined caprides with emphasized phalli clearly illustrate the scene's connotation of fertility.³⁷⁹

The fertility connection is also at work in and receives further support from the many images that present a naked goddess riding on a lion mount. Yet before turning to these, it should be noted that even such a strange and imposing piece as the Burney relief (**fig. 4.250**) has been thought to represent Ishtar with her fertility connections.³⁸⁰

There are many depictions of a naked fertility goddess with accompanying lion mount. Examples are attested from Minet el-Beida/Ugarit (**figs. 4.251–252**), and, especially, New Kingdom Egypt (**figs. 4.253–255**).³⁸¹ It is not always certain which goddess(es) is portrayed in these images. Although several of the pieces identify the goddess as *qdš*, this could be understood as an epithet (“holiness”) for Ašrat/Ašerah.³⁸² In other cases, however, Qadesh/Qudshu seems to be a distinct deity. Moreover, the Winchester relief (**fig. 4.256**) actually combines *qdš* with two other deities in one presentation,

³⁷⁸ See, e.g., the seal of “Amurru, son of Anu” which presents this deity with caprid in similar pose: *ANEP*, 702 (see p. 333 for discussion); Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, Pl. 28e (164–65 for discussion).

³⁷⁹ Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, 194.

³⁸⁰ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 62–63. See further Thorkild Jacobsen, “Pictures and Pictorial Language (The Burney Relief),” in *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* (ed. M. Mindlin, M. J. Geller, and J. E. Wansbrough; London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1987), 1–11. The authenticity of the piece has been questioned. E.g., Pauline Albenda, “The Burney Relief Reconsidered,” *JANES* 2 (1969–1970): 87–93. Most of Albenda’s points are capably refuted by Jacobsen.

³⁸¹ See also *ANEP*, 470 = *ABAT2*, Abb. 272 (1550–1090), *ANEP*, 473 = *ABAT2*, Abb. 270 (the goddess is here called *ḫnṯ*, 1350–1200), *ANEP*, 474 (inscription: “Qadesh, lady of the sky and mistress of all the gods”; date: 1550–1090). Note also Ruth Hestrin, “The Cult Stand from Taḫanach and its Religious Background,” in *Studia Phoenicia V: Phoenicia and the East Mediterranean in the First Millennium B.C.: Proceedings of the Conference held in Leuven from the 14th to the 16th of November 1985* (ed. E. Lipiński; OLA 22; Leuven: Peeters, 1987), 68 and n. 13. For additional examples, see Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 207, 209, 209a, 210, 213; cf. also 215 and 216.

³⁸² See *CMHE*, 33–34 as well as the literature cited in Hestrin, “The Cult Stand from Taḫanach,” 68 n. 15. Note also the related discussion in Chapter 3 (§3.2 at **fig. 3.3**).

producing the amalgam “Qadesh/Qudshu-Astarte-Anat.”³⁸³ Cornelius has noted that it is “often difficult” to keep the goddesses Aṭirat, Attart, Anat, Asherah, Astarte, and Qadesh/Qudshu straight because there was a close relationship between these goddesses and they were frequently confused.³⁸⁴ It is quite possible, then, that the naked-goddess-on-lion could represent more than one deity. It seems certain that this particular presentation connects the lion to the goddess(es) in her fertility aspect.³⁸⁵ And, of course, “the” fertility goddess was known in various places by different names, including Sumerian Inanna, Akkadian Ishtar, and West Semitic Aṭirat, Attart, Astarte, Asherah, and Qudshu.³⁸⁶

Further examples of the naked goddess can be provided—an Old Babylonian seal impression (**fig. 4.257**), for instance, or the unique frontal perspective preserved on a Syrian ivory piece that may have been a head plate for a horse (**fig. 4.258**). But it should also be remembered that the goddess on lion mount is found in diverse areas, including Hatti, where, in the famous rock reliefs of Yazilikaya, the goddess Hebat rides atop a lion striding on a mountain range (**fig. 4.259**). Other areas also knew of the goddess on lion mount, as in an orthostat from Tell Halaf (**fig. 4.260**),³⁸⁷ or on the gold bowl from Hasanlu already discussed above (**fig. 4.241**), which also portrays a goddess riding—though this time in an unusual (side-saddle?) seated position—on a lion with a nose-rope (**fig. 4.261**). Various objects also demonstrate the survival of the motif into much later periods in other areas and with other goddesses.³⁸⁸

In sum, the god or goddess with lion mount is well and widely attested across locales, media, periods, and the like. It should be repeated that this association is not only iconographical. Texts also know of this portrayal: texts mentioning Ishtar’s connections with lions have already been mentioned above; another text from the time of Sargon II speaks of protective genii, “the soles of whose feet rest on ferocious lions.”³⁸⁹ But what more can be said of the significance of this presentation? According to Cornelius, “[t]he lion pedestal complemented the motif of war, as the lion was a dangerous and mighty animal.”³⁹⁰ This judgment seems, in the main, sound. Nefertem, for instance, was “usually seen as a benevolent god of perfume, however, it seems that this

³⁸³ See I. E. S. Edwards, “A Relief of Qudshu-Astarte-Anath in the Winchester College Collection,” *JNES* 14 (1955): 49-51 and Pls. III-IV.

³⁸⁴ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 62.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 62-63.

³⁸⁷ There is some debate over whether or not the figures on the Tell Halaf orthostats are divine; if members of the royal family are intended, it may be that they are divinized.

³⁸⁸ See, e.g., *CMHE*, 35 and nn. 135-36; and also *TDOT*, 1:381-82 for Tinnit, Atargatis (Hera), and the Palmyran goddess Gad with the lion. For the latter, see further below. Cf. also *ABAT2*, Abb. 277, a naos of the Roman period showing a lioness goddess.

³⁸⁹ *ša šī ar šī pū šī na sukbusa lab-bi nadr-te*, *CAD L*, 25, citing TCL 3 375.

³⁹⁰ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 60.

friendly lotus-crowned god becomes a ferocious guardian god in his leonine aspect as a son of Sekhmet.”³⁹¹ But the Qadesh/Qudshu images point out that the war connotations are only one important aspect; fertility seems to be another. Still another must be mentioned: in these contexts the deity rides on—typically strides or stands upon—the lion. As already discussed, such a position is one of dominance. This is demonstrated by the similar syntactical portrayal of various deities, including Ishtar, in the same pose though with their feet on *human victims*. The leash or nose-rope also stresses this dominance, as, again, deities (or monarchs) are often portrayed holding victims (or prisoners of war) with similar devices.³⁹² The lion mount, then, is a *dominated animal*—suitably controlled by the deity in question. This is true whether the deity be presented primarily in a threatening (warlike) aspect or in one of blessing (fertility). In both cases, the power of the deity in question receives special emphasis and the lion’s considerable power is shown to be minimal when compared with the deity’s. Of course, the latter receives its force, in part, due to the former.

The dominance of the lion is probably also at work in a closely-related motif that should be mentioned along with the lion mount. This is the presentation of the deity *on a throne* decorated with, or composed of, lions.³⁹³ The close relationship between the two motifs is illustrated by the Maltaya relief (**fig. 4.247**). The stela of Esarhaddon from Zinjirli (**fig. 4.262**) has a very similar presentation, but one could just as easily compare the Old Syrian seal impression of a goddess on a throne on a lion that she has leashed (**fig. 4.263**), or the still earlier statue of a now-headless deity (probably Inanna-Ishtar) on a throne with lions on the sides and back and in front under the divine feet (**fig. 4.264**).³⁹⁴ The presentation, in any event, is as early as Ur III.³⁹⁵ It is Inanna/Ishtar who is frequently portrayed in this fashion, especially on Akkadian cylinder seals (**figs. 4.265–267**). The Legend of Etana confirms this as it describes lions at the base of a throne in the heavens.³⁹⁶ Though the text is

³⁹¹ Grzyski, “A Statuette,” 200. Cf. Györy, “Une amulette,” 234–35.

³⁹² Cf. the relief from Zohab depicting Ishtar with lip-rope on a human (Wilcke and Seidl, “Inanna/Ištar,” Abb. 1 = *ANEP*, 524; 23rd century) already mentioned; or the Zinjirli stela of Esarhaddon (Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 407).

³⁹³ Again, the standard work is Metzger, *Königsthron und Gottesthron*; see there, e.g., 2:132 (Taf. 65), 146 (Taf. 72).

³⁹⁴ For a discussion see, Marie-Thérèse Barrelet, “Les déesses armées et ailées,” *Syria* 32 (1955): 254–55.

³⁹⁵ See Van Buren, *Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 6 and the lion on/beside (?) the god’s throne on Gudea’s stela.

³⁹⁶ Etana Late Version, IV.12–14: *ina šap-la GIŠ.kussî la-b[e na-ad-ru-ti (?) i-ṛ]ab-[bi-ṁu] at-bi-ma a-na-ku la-be i[š-taj-j i-ju-ni (?)] ag-gal-tam-ma ap-ta-ru-ṁd... : “For at the base of throne [fierce] lions were ly[ing]. As I went forward the lions j[umped up at me],—Then I woke up with a start, trembling [(and shaking)].” For the text and translation see J. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Legend of Etana: A New Edition* (Chicago: Bochart-Carducci Publishers, 1985), 110–11 (slightly modified). See also *CAD L*, 25, *ANET*, 118. Note also the “Etana” seal (*ANEP*, 695, with discussion on p. 333; cf. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 80 and fig. 59f.).*

broken and the owner of the throne cannot be discerned with absolute certainty, it is said to belong to a young woman (*batultu*), who is a divine being, and, since Ishtar does play a role in the legend, she very well may be the figure involved.³⁹⁷ A more certain textual reference is: “B₂ltu sits on a lion [...], strong lions crouch under her,”³⁹⁸ if B₂ltu here does, in fact, refer to Ishtar.³⁹⁹

To be sure, it is often unclear whether the goddess enthroned on lions is Ishtar or another. It is thus likely that several different deities are so portrayed. It is certainly the case that this presentation is attested quite early and in different fashions, as is clear from the Susa cylinder seal in **fig. 4.20** or the slightly later, early second-millennium Anatolian seals from Kültepe (**figs. 4.268–270**). The lion throne with the goddess also had a long life, as is evidenced in its continued use in much later periods.⁴⁰⁰

Male deities are also enthroned on lions. A late third-millennium (Ur III) piece depicts the priest Urdun before the Lord of Girsu (Lagash), Ningirsu (**fig. 4.271**). Ningirsu’s fearsome nature is highlighted by an abundance of lions: they emerge from his shoulders, cross on the sides of his throne, and support his feet. Much later, from the last quarter of the second millennium is the colossal, but unfinished, sculpture found at Fassilar (**fig. 4.272**). Though the god (and goddess) in the reconstruction both stand/stride on the lion pedestals, the overall composition is somewhat akin to much later Persian throne presentations (cf. **fig. 4.168**). From the first part of the first millennium is the statue from the royal gateway at Carchemish (**fig. 4.273**). The god, perhaps identified as Atarluhas on inscriptions from the edging of his clothing,⁴⁰¹ is enthroned on a lion pedestal, while a bird-headed divinity holds the two lions. An example of a somewhat later, and much smaller piece, is the bronze male figure—probably divine—seated on a throne flanked by lions, said to be from Syria (**fig. 4.274**).

Such thrones could be stylized and abbreviated so that it is often only the feet and legs of the thrones that are leonine. This is a rather common practice,⁴⁰² and occurs with non-divine thrones as well as other types of furniture (see, e.g., **figs. 4.162–166**). Still, the overall effect, as with the use of

³⁹⁷ See Kinnier-Wilson, *Legend of Etana*, 120–23, 135.

³⁹⁸ ⁰GAŠAN ina mu₂j₂i UR.MA₂ ušbat ... [...] UR.MA₂.MEŠ dann-tu šapašša kar[šul]; CAD N/2, 196, citing LKA 32 rev. 5–6.

³⁹⁹ See the discussion in K. van der Toorn, “Beltu,” in *DDD*, 171–73.

⁴⁰⁰ Note Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 31 for a relief from Palmyra depicting the city Fortune of Palmyra with a lion (158 AD/CE). For still later pieces, see *ABAT2*, Abb. 364. Cf. Harvey Weiss, ed., *Ebla to Damascus: Art and Archaeology of Ancient Syria: An Exhibition from the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums Syrian Arab Republic* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1985), 371 fig. 72, a cult relief from Dura-Europos with Hadad and Atargatis.

⁴⁰¹ See Woolley, *Art of the Middle East*, 155.

⁴⁰² Note the unfinished stela from Ugarit depicting a deity (perhaps El?) on a throne with lion feet (*Ebla to Damascus* #151; ca. 1300–1200). For additional examples see Metzger, *Königsthron und Gottesthron*, 2:228–29 (Taf. 109).

a lion as a mount, casts the numinous power of the lion upon the owner—in the current examples, the enthroned god or goddess.

4.4.3. *The God(s) as Lion(s)*

The previous sections have demonstrated that a close relationship between the divine and the leonine is a long-standing tradition in the history of the ancient Near East—at least as early as the 7/6th millennium if the Çatal Hüyük piece (fig. 4.222) is any indicator. But this *association* is also attested as *identification*. Numerous deities are not only associated with lions, that is, but are actually identified as such throughout the ancient Near East. Indeed, as Mary Kathleen Brown states: “At first glance it appears that hardly a major god is represented in the developed pantheon to whose lions some reference, however vestigial, may not be found. Such references exist both in the extant literature and in the more silent artifacts.”⁴⁰³ Nowhere is this more true than in Egyptian religion; de Wit has catalogued no less than thirty gods and thirty-one goddesses “en rapport avec le lion.”⁴⁰⁴

4.4.3.1. *Egypt*. Obviously, the sheer number of Egyptian deities associated with the lion precludes an exhaustive discussion. This high number is further complicated by the fact that the lion(-god) and lion-cults played an important role in the prehistoric and earliest/archaic historical periods⁴⁰⁵ and were apparently popular in both Upper and Lower (Delta) Egypt.⁴⁰⁶ Such a situation

⁴⁰³ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 1.

⁴⁰⁴ These include the following gods (see de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 191-281):

lItm, *Sw*, *ꜥk3*, *lImn*, *lIn-ꜥr.t*, *Bꜣ*, *Ptꜥ*, *Mꜥ-hs3*, *Mnw*, *Nfr-tm*, *ꜥr-3j.tj*, *ꜥr-m-3j.t* or *ꜥwr*, *ꜥwrwn*, *ꜥr*, *ꜥr-ꜥknw*, *ꜥr T3m*, *ꜥr Wr*, divine-headed sphinx (*ꜥr*, *Mnꜥw*, etc.), *K3-hmhm.t*, *Hr.tj*, *Ypd.w*, *lIrj-ꜥmꜣ-nfr*, *Nn-wn*, *ꜥr-p3-hrd*, *ꜥr-smꜥ-ꜥwj*, *lIꜥj*, *Ssmw*, *Twt(w)* “et le sphinx panthée,” *Dꜥwtj*, *ꜥꜣꜣw*, and *Mꜥj wr pꜥtj*,

and the following goddesses (see *ibid.*, 285-366):

Bꜣꜣt.t, *Mꜥtj.t*, *Mꜥj.t*, *ꜥ.t-ꜥr*, *Ssm.t*, *Yj m.t*, *Nꜣr.t*, *Tnn.t*, *Tfn.t*, *Wꜣꜣ.t* or *Wꜣꜣ*, *Ybq.t*, *Ymn.t* or *Ymnt.t*, *T3-ꜣn.t-nfr.t*, *Dd.t*, *Wr.t-ꜥk3w*, *P3j.t*, *Njb.t*, *T3-Wr.t*, *Y.t* or *3Y.t*, *Wꜥꜥ.t*, *Mw.t*, *Mnꜥj.t*, *Mnꜥ.t*, *Mꜣꜣ-gr*, *lIp.t*, *Wnw.t*, *Mnꜥ.t*, *Mꜥn.t*, *Nb.t-Ww*, *Rꜣj.t*, and *Rnn-wt.t*.

Several of the above are variants or versions of others, but note that the tabulation does not include *3kr* (*ibid.*, 91-106), *Rw.tj* (*ibid.*, 123-37), the solar deity in general (*ibid.*, 138-47), the lions on later Ptolemaic stelae (*ibid.*, 276-80), nor the lion of Athribis (*ibid.*, 367) or the foreign deities *Qdꜥ*, *ꜥstrꜥ*, and so forth (*ibid.*, 367-68). See additionally Muchiki, “The Unidentified God *PMY*,” 7-10, for (Phoenician and Punic) *pmꜣ*’s possible relationship to Egyptian *p3-mꜣj* (“the lion”).

⁴⁰⁵ See de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 191-95; Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 1:24, 2:359-60. Cf. also Anthony S. Mercatante, *Who’s Who in Egyptian Mythology* (2d ed.; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1995), 87. For an Old Kingdom lion-cult, see Hans Goedicke, “A Lion-Cult of the Old Kingdom Connected with the Royal Temple,” *REG* 11 (1957): 57-60. See further note 443 below on the later lion cult of ancient Nubia.

⁴⁰⁶ See *TDOT*, 1:378.

in and of itself clearly communicates a distinct message as Goodenough clearly saw:

Even more conspicuous a symbol of divinity and royalty was the lion in Egypt, where he typifies so many gods and goddesses that he clearly announces divine power in terms not limited to any one divinity.⁴⁰⁷

While this is certainly correct, some more specific remarks can nevertheless be made and are in order.

Perhaps the first comment is that the lion was often presented as a solar animal, associated with the sun god, as in the Book of the Dead, where Re states “I am the Lion, Re. I am the savage bull.”⁴⁰⁸ The lion is, therefore, (a/the manifestation of) the sun god.⁴⁰⁹ Consequently, solar deities—especially Ra, but also Horus and others—are often identified with the lion, and the lion is frequently portrayed with the solar disk on its head.⁴¹⁰ The sun god is called the “lion of the lower-heaven,” “mysterious lion of the eastern mountain,” and “lion of the night.”⁴¹¹ There is also the double-lion god Ruty (*Rw.tj*), who is sometimes portrayed as a single solar deity, at other times as two deities, (later) identified as Shu and his consort Tefnut.⁴¹² Ruty is also associated with the east and west mountains as these are the locales whence the sun rises and where it sets. Hence, one frequently finds the horizon demarcated by lions (see **figs. 4.81–83**). Such a presentation is not unrelated to Aker, an earth-god, who is frequently represented with two lion heads or as a double sphinx.⁴¹³ Aker is also a helper of the dead, primarily because he guarded the gate of the dawn/morning—the entrance/exit of the underworld.⁴¹⁴ The other gate, that of the night/evening, was also guarded by a lion, and these two lions are together called the Akeru, later Sef (“yesterday”) and Tuau (“today”).⁴¹⁵ The fact that such lion-gods were placed at these strategic locations facilitated two important

⁴⁰⁷ Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 12:134.

⁴⁰⁸ Book of the Dead chap. 62, cited in Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 77; cf. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead: The Papyrus of Ani* (New York: Dover, 1967), 92, 310.

⁴⁰⁹ See de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 138-47 and the texts cited there; also *TDOT*, 1:378; and Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:360. The solar deity as lion/lion as solar-deity is confirmed also in various Greco-Roman writers (de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 145-47). Cf. also Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:360 on Aelian’s testimony to lions at Heliopolis that were hand fed and sung to (!) while eating.

⁴¹⁰ Cf. Beatrice Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals of the Middle Bronze Age* (OBO.SA 11; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 1996), 189.

⁴¹¹ *TDOT*, 1:378.

⁴¹² See de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 107-22 and 123-37, especially 123-24; and Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 284.

⁴¹³ Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 258.

⁴¹⁴ Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 274; de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 91-106; Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 25; Mercatante, *Egyptian Mythology*, 4, 87; Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:360.

⁴¹⁵ Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:360-61; Mercatante, *Egyptian Mythology*, 87.

developments: 1) the lion, as a solar animal, “could symbolize not only destruction and death at night but also *rebirth* in the morning”;⁴¹⁶ and 2) the lion was frequently used as an *apotropaic* figure, guarding the entrances/exits of palace and temple (see §4.5 below).⁴¹⁷ The first development explains in part why the death-bier was frequently given leonine form with a lion’s head and/or feline feet.⁴¹⁸ The second development helps to explain—or, perhaps better, is explained by—the protective function associated with the lion-god. For instance, Horus, who is called “the great lion who routs his enemies” and so forth, was also worshipped as “frontier-guard” in the form of a lion.⁴¹⁹

Not all instances of the god-as-lion were so protective or benign, however. Oftentimes the leonine connection or presentation serves primarily or exclusively to highlight the dangerous aspect of the deity. This was briefly highlighted earlier with Nefertem. It is much more evident in Nefertem’s mother, the goddess Sekhmet.

Sekhmet, whose name means simply the “Powerful One,”⁴²⁰ is frequently portrayed as a lioness (**fig. 4.275**). She later became the consort of Ptah of Memphis, and this pair, along with their son Nefertem, formed the Memphite triad of the New Kingdom.⁴²¹ She is “a warlike creature...[who] dispenses ailments” and thus the mistress of war and sickness.⁴²² And yet, as is so often the case with the lion—Sekhmet’s leonine nature is rather bipolar: in addition to disseminating diseases, she also cures them “and, in her role as the sun’s destructive eye, attacks hostile powers.”⁴²³ So, in a passage from the Book of the Gates, Sekhmet can be described as one of those who “protect the souls” of Asiatics, Libyans, and others.⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁶ Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 77 (emphasis mine).

⁴¹⁷ Mercatante, *Egyptian Mythology*, 87; Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:361.

⁴¹⁸ Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 77. Cf. Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:362. The lion-bier is also part of the sign for the 20th nome (“Sopdu”) (see Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 88 and 89 fig. 20).

⁴¹⁹ *TDOT*, 1:378; Botterweck, “Gott und Mensch,” 125.

⁴²⁰ Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 17; Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 106; Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 282.

⁴²¹ Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 17, 266, 268. Sekhmet’s cult seems to have been centered in Memphis (see Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 282; Walter A. Maier, III, *ASERAH: Extrabiblical Evidence* [HSM 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986], 225 n. 25).

⁴²² Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 23, 268.

⁴²³ Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 282.

⁴²⁴ Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 51. See Erik Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 55-77, 173-75, for the Book of Gates. Hornung places the composition in the New Kingdom. A translation can be found in E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Heaven and Hell* (3 vols.; London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1905), 2:43-306. On these more protective connotations, note Smith, *Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, fig. 67, from the Lower Temple of the Bent Pyramid (Dynasty 4) where Snofru is with a lioness goddess (Sekhmet?) who is “breathing life into the nostrils of the king” (*ibid.*, 76). On this point, see recently Zahi Hawass, “A Fragmentary Monument of Djoser from Saqqara,” *JEA* 80 (1994): 45-56,

In the majority of cases, however, it is Sekhmet's dangerous aspect that receives emphasis. Thus, while some of her priests were doctors, in the main Sekhmet's messengers brought sickness; annual epidemics were frequently attributed to her.⁴²⁵ The hot desert winds were identified as her fiery breath and she was connected with the fire-spitting uraeus of the king, becoming, thereby, the "eye of Ra."⁴²⁶ It is no surprise, then, that "the deity's worshippers lived in fear of the rage of the goddess (in which the unpredictability of her animal, the lion, was reflected), and sought to appease her," especially as she was known to have struck the enemies of Ra, felled Apophis, and killed the companions of Seth.⁴²⁷ Indeed, in the Egyptian myth of the destruction of humankind, the violent goddess is pictured as a raging lioness. Only an intoxicating drink dissuades her, turning her into a harmless cat.⁴²⁸ This explains why wine was often used in the cult for the "ritual assuaging of deities, especially goddesses in lioness form. It neutralizes their dangerous, unpredictable side."⁴²⁹ It is the cult, therefore, that protects one from the lion-goddess. In this way, the very real and possible danger is averted, and the deity is appeased so that "[a]fter having showed me the force of her hand, she showed me its sweetness."⁴³⁰

Sekhmet was frequently associated with or identified as other goddesses who, in turn, are also portrayed in leonine form. Indeed, "[m]ost leonine deities were female."⁴³¹ Hence, Sekhmet is connected with Astarte, who was worshipped in Egypt from Dynasty 18 through the Ptolemaic period (**fig. 4.276**).⁴³² The Theban Mut is often portrayed as a lioness, especially when figured as the eye of the sun,⁴³³ and her assimilation with Sekhmet is amply demonstrated by the hundreds of Sekhmet statues set up by Amenhotep III at

who has argued that the lion figures on a Third Dynasty monument are lionesses representing a lion goddess (Sekhmet or another) in her role as nurse and mother of the king.

⁴²⁵ Maier, *ASERAH*, 225 n. 25.

⁴²⁶ Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 106.

⁴²⁷ Maier, *ASERAH*, 225 n. 25; cf. Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 106.

⁴²⁸ Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 205. For the myth, see *ANET*, 10-11; Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians*, 47-49. For the lioness goddess in other legends, see de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 288-90. For the cat, "a poor man's lion," in Egypt, see Jaromir Malek, *The Cat in Ancient Egypt* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), especially 73-111 for connections between lions, cats, and their associated goddesses. See also Aleid de Jong, "Feline Deities," in *OEAE* 1:512-13.

⁴²⁹ Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 205.

⁴³⁰ Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 7:86; see also 7:48. Sekhmet may be the figure represented on the Hebrew seal of ʾUzzā son of ʾṬ (חַתָּם בֶּן ʾוֹזָא; **fig. 3.86**; *CWSSS* #298).

⁴³¹ Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 77; de Jong, "Feline Deities," 1:513: "feline deities are predominantly female." But see de Wit's work (note 404 above) which shows a balance in male and female lion deities.

⁴³² Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 260; de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 367-68.

⁴³³ Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 82, cf. 77; Mercatante, *Egyptian Mythology*, 99; de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 350-53.

the temple of Mut at Karnak.⁴³⁴ Other deities were also equated with Sekhmet. These include Mehit of This⁴³⁵ and Bastet—the latter of whom was originally portrayed as a lion or as lion-headed, but who was increasingly “domesticated” so that she was eventually represented as a cat, the benevolent counterpart of Sekhmet.⁴³⁶

There are still other leontomorphic Egyptian goddesses. The most important of these include Tefnut,⁴³⁷ Hathor,⁴³⁸ Isis,⁴³⁹ Pakhet,⁴⁴⁰ and Merseger,⁴⁴¹ most of whom have some sort of solar connection as the “eye of Ra.” Also common to some of these goddesses is that they “were considered to be representations of the original, first feminine being and to have a dual nature in which fiery anarchic and destructive characteristics coexisted with pacific and creative elements.”⁴⁴²

Similar connotations are found when the lion-deity in question is male, and there is no shortage of these.⁴⁴³ These gods’ leonine form typically serves

⁴³⁴ See Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 265; Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 106; and, additionally, Malek, *Egyptian Art*, 126; *ANEP*, 558; Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 106.

⁴³⁵ Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 77; *TDOT*, 1:378; de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 300-306.

⁴³⁶ See H. te Velde, “Bastet,” in *DDD*, 164; Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, 260, cf. also 265; de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 292-98.

⁴³⁷ See de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 324-32; Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 284; Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:88-89; Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 119; Mercatante, *Egyptian Mythology*, 184.

⁴³⁸ See de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 306-309; H. Heerma van Voss, “Hathor,” in *DDD*, 385-86; Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 58-59; Mercatante, *Egyptian Mythology*, 53-55.

⁴³⁹ See de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 347; J. Assmann, “Isis,” in *DDD*, 456-58; Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 71-72.

⁴⁴⁰ See Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 281; de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 339-42; *TDOT*, 1:378; Mercatante, *Egyptian Mythology*, 117. Pakhet was worshiped at the mouth of a wadi in Middle Egypt (Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 281) and Botterweck noted that many lioness cults were found at the mouths of wilderness wadis in Upper Egypt (*TDOT*, 1:378). See more generally de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 285-88 on “la lionne maîtresse de la vallée.” She includes Sekhmet of Memphis; Hathor of Tehna, Dendera, Karnak, El Kab, and Gebelein; Pakhet of Speos Artemidos; Matit of Deir el Gebrawi; Mehit of Meshayikh; and Nebtouou of Esna among these and notes “[c]es lionnes, comme maîtresses du désert, ont un caractère sauvage, et si elles sont devenues favorables aux hommes, elles n’en sont pas moins redoutables” (285).

⁴⁴¹ De Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 358-59; Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 80. Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 20 cites the following from a hymn to this goddess: “Beware the Mountaintop [an epithet of the goddess], for there is a lion in the pinnacle; she strikes, like a wild lion strikes, and pursues whomever sins against her.”

⁴⁴² H. te Velde, “Bastet,” 164.

⁴⁴³ Even so, cf. Romano, “The Beast of Kings,” 67, who indicates that “the pantheon of Egyptian deities contained few gods who took the form of male lions.” Those that did were frequently composite and apotropaic. He contrasts this situation with the worship of Apedemak, the leonine war god worshipped in ancient Nubia. See Christian Onasch, “Zum Löwenkult von Meroe,” *OLZ* 74 (1979): 101-105; L. V. Žabkar, *Apedemak, Lion God of Meroe: A Study in Egyptian-Meroitic Syncretism* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1975); and László Török, *The Image of the Ordered World in Ancient Nubian Art: The*

to highlight certain violent characteristics, for instance, the bloodthirstiness of Shesmu.⁴⁴⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, to find Amun described as “the mysterious lion with a loud roar, which tears apart that which falls into his claws...a lion for his people,”⁴⁴⁵ or to find him compared to a lion that loves its possessions.⁴⁴⁶ In the later papyrus of Nesi-Khensu (Dynasty 21), Amun is called “the Lion-god with awesome eye.”⁴⁴⁷ Other deities are similarly portrayed: Horus, Aker,⁴⁴⁸ and Shu⁴⁴⁹ have already been mentioned. Others could be added to the list, but perhaps the most important of the lion gods is Mahes (“raging lion”), attested in theophoric PNs in the Middle Kingdom, but as a self-standing deity only in the New Kingdom.⁴⁵⁰ Mahes (fig. 4.277) was the son of Ra and Sekhmet/Bastet, whose cult center was, appropriately, Leontopolis.⁴⁵¹ It is likely that sacred lions were kept there as well as in other cult centers in ancient Egypt.⁴⁵² In the New Kingdom, Mahes is invoked in the appellation of the king who is “Mahes, son of Sekhmet” or “terrible lion” (*m³-hs³*).⁴⁵³ The destructive aspect of this lion-god is shown in the fact that “[a]près la XXIIe dynastie, la scène du lion dévorant un homme était régulièrement consacrée à Mahès.”⁴⁵⁴ Yet even here one cannot escape the double-aspect of the lion: protective lion figures—including a colossal lion from Leontopolis (Tell Moqdam)—are frequently named “Mahes.”⁴⁵⁵

To summarize the Egyptian evidence: deities presented as lions are generally bellicose—be they male or female. Even so, their warlike,

Construction of the Kushite Mind (800 BC–300 AD) (PdÄ 18; Leiden: Brill, 2002), especially 187-200, 226-41.

⁴⁴⁴ See de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 267-69; *TDOT*, 1:378.

⁴⁴⁵ *TDOT*, 1:378; Teeter, “Animals in Egyptian Literature,” 269. Botterweck, “Gott und Mensch,” 125 adds that Amun is also described as “wildblickender Löwe mit grimmigen Krallen.”

⁴⁴⁶ Wenamun II.34 (cf. also II, 24). See *LAE*, 150; *ARE*, 4:283 (§580) lines 33-34; Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians*, 181; *AEL*, 2:227; *ANET*, 27 (see *ibid.* n. 27 for the possibility that this may be a proverb). The Report of Wenamun is dated to the 12th or 11th century (*ANET*, 25).

⁴⁴⁷ Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:14; see also 2:2. For Amun in general, see de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 195-98.

⁴⁴⁸ De Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 91-106.

⁴⁴⁹ See Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 283; Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:88; de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 198-213, cf. also 107-22.

⁴⁵⁰ See de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 230; cf. also Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals*, 189. In the Pyramid Texts the term signifies only “lion.”

⁴⁵¹ Mercatante, *Egyptian Mythology*, 87, 89; Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 279; de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 230-34.

⁴⁵² See Mercatante, *Egyptian Mythology*, 87; Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 2:360. For Leontopolis, see de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 423-25. De Wit also mentions 155 (!) other locations associated with lions or lion deities (426-40). Cf. the discussion of tame lions in Egypt above.

⁴⁵³ De Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 230.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 231; see further 231-32 for connections to Nefertem and Horus.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 232-33.

threatening, and destructive aspects do not comprise an exhaustive description; these deities also manifest positive, protective aspects.⁴⁵⁶ How much these latter items are dependent on or connected to the lion might be debated; however, given the wide attestation of the “double-signification” of the lion in other contexts, it is best to connect both aspects—the threatening and the protective—to what Hornung has called the “ambivalent nature” of the lion.⁴⁵⁷

4.4.3.2. *Mesopotamia.* Mesopotamian religion—better: *religions*—is impossible to characterize in toto.⁴⁵⁸ It is, nevertheless, safe to say that it differed in many respects from that of ancient Egypt. Thorkild Jacobsen’s theory of zoomorphic-to-anthropomorphic development in deity depictions aside,⁴⁵⁹ there is little direct artistic evidence of zoomorphic presentation of the deities, in marked contrast to Egypt.⁴⁶⁰ Nevertheless, there are a number of gods—both male and female—that are compared to or called lions in the textual material. To cite only the laudatory hymns to the major temples in Sumer and Akkad, three major deities are called lions: Ninurta at Nippur, Ningirsu at Girsu, and Ninazu at Eshnunna.⁴⁶¹ Ninurta, for instance, is called “[t]he foremost, the lion, whom the Great Mountain has engendered, He who destroys the hostile land for him (= Enlil), the lord Ninurta.”⁴⁶² Other deities are also called lions—Asalluhe and Ishkur, for instance.⁴⁶³ Brown has argued that these specific deities are all storm gods and that this aspect is what explains their leonine descriptions, since the lion, especially its roar, is a numinous indicator of the power of the thunderstorm.⁴⁶⁴ Brown’s indebtedness to Jacobsen is readily apparent here,⁴⁶⁵ yet I remain unconvinced that there is *only one* element that

⁴⁵⁶ In addition to the deities and characteristics mentioned above, note also Bes (*Bṣ*). See H. te Velde, “Bes,” in *DDD*, 173; de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 226-29.

⁴⁵⁷ Hornung, *Conceptions of God*, 282.

⁴⁵⁸ See the important cautions in Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 172-83.

⁴⁵⁹ Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, especially 9, 14, 20-21.

⁴⁶⁰ Even in Egypt, however, it is important to note that zoomorphically-portrayed deities are typically *composite*.

⁴⁶¹ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 16.

⁴⁶² Åke W. Sjöberg and E. Bergmann, S. J., *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns* (TCS 3; Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin, 1969), 21 (TH No. 5, lines 73-74). Cf. Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 16, 89 n. 1; and Lewis, “CT 13.33-34,” 43, 45, and 43 n. 110 and the references there. Additional examples of Ninurta-as-lion can be found in Heimpel, *Tierbilder*, 296, 313-14, 317-19.

⁴⁶³ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 10, 16-17, 85-89 n. 8, 91 n. 6; cf. also *TDOT*, 1:379. These are not the only deities so depicted. Cf. Anu (*la-bu-um Anum*; *CAD* L, 24-25, citing VAS 10 215:17), Adad (see *rigimšu kama* UR.GU.LA *iddi*; *CAD* N/2, 196, citing ACh Adad 11:9), Irnini (^d*Ir-ni-ni-i-tum la-ab-bu nadru libbaki lin-ja*; “Irninatum, raging lion, may your heart find calm”; *CAD* L, 24, citing STC 2 pl. 79:51), and Ishmedagan who moves “like a fierce lion of the steppe,” “in his raging power,” “for fighting and battle” (*TDOT*, 1:379-80).

⁴⁶⁴ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 12-15, 17-18, and *passim*.

⁴⁶⁵ Cf. Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 128-29. Another example is Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 25-26 where she understands the lion to be the earlier, pristine form that only

united the various deities portrayed as leonine,⁴⁶⁶ or that that one, unifying element, if it existed, should be something “*beyond the predatory nature of the beast...which [was] early engraved on the Mesopotamian’s consciousness and determined for him the animal’s nature as a type, as a representation of some natural phenomenon, as a symbol.*”⁴⁶⁷ That is to say that while there very well may be—and actually is—more to the lion as image of the (Mesopotamian) god than simply predation, it is certainly no less than that, which is what Brown’s exclusive focus on the thunderstorm implies. The importance of predation to the lion image has been repeatedly stressed above as well as in earlier chapters of this work. In the present discussion of Mesopotamian deities, it receives further demonstration by the fact that the god-as-lion image frequently occurs in the context of violent, militaristic/war imagery.⁴⁶⁸ To be sure, the aspects of storm and war should not be completely divorced from each other, but neither should they be simplistically collapsed and identified. Perhaps nowhere is their combination clearer and yet more complexly linked than in the figure of the Imdugud/Anzû bird (**fig. 4.278**).⁴⁶⁹ According to the mythology, Imdugud stole the tablets of destiny from Enki (Sumerian version) or from Enlil (Akkadian version) and is subsequently killed by Ninurta/Ningirsu and so becomes that god’s familiar.⁴⁷⁰ The connection between the two figures is quite early—attested already in the stela of Eannatum (the “Stela of Vultures”)—where Ningirsu holds a net full of prisoners by means of the Imdugud and its lion protomes (**fig. 4.279**). The leonine protomes may be related to the common triangular arrangements of the

later developed into the composite lion-headed bird (the Imdugud/Anzu). Hence, Brown would take many pre-Sargonic seals that show contest scenes between the lion and a bearded bison as “instances of Ninurta in his leonine form attacking an antagonist” (26). If this were the case, this would be of great significance for the present work, but I do not find it demonstrable.

⁴⁶⁶ See Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 19, 40.

⁴⁶⁷ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 7-8 (emphasis mine).

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. the citations above and add Ninazu, who is “a great lion, the enemy hangs down from his claw” (Sjöberg and Bergmann, *Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*, 42 [TH No. 34 line 439]); Ningirsu, who is “the furious lion who smashes the head (of the enemies)” (ibid., 32 [TH No. 20 line 256]); and Nergal, who is a “lion, violent with terrifying splendor” (TDOT, 1:380). Cf. TDOT, 1:380: “Again and again the ‘roaring,’ ‘destroying,’ ‘fierce,’ ‘terror-striking,’ ‘fighting’ lion is used to characterize the gods Martu, Nanna, Nergal, Ninazu, Ningirsu, Ningizzida, Ninurta, Numushda, Shulti, Utu, and Zabada.” This listing indicates that more is at work here than the storm alone because not all of these deities are storm gods (cf. Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, 136). It should be recalled that Nergal is mentioned in 2 Kgs 17:30, in close proximity to the passage about Yahweh sending lions on the people of Samaria.

⁴⁶⁹ An extensive study can be found in Ilse Fuhr-Jaepelt, *Materialien zur Ikonographie des Löwenadlers Anzu-Imdugud* (München: Scharl + Strohmeyer, 1972).

⁴⁷⁰ Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 107. See also Thorkild Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture* (ed. William L. Moran; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 3-5, 17, 32-33, 339 n. 27; Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 20-25; TDOT, 1:379.

Imdugud with lions (e.g., **fig. 4.280**). Brown has studied this composition closely and has concluded that the image is neither one of dominance or dependence. Instead, the lions are the duplicates “of the essence of the god, an outward extension of some aspect of the character of the central axis Imdugud.”⁴⁷¹ That particular aspect(s) may be related to the thunderous roar (storm) or martial connotations.⁴⁷² But the lions in this presentation are also “forces for attack” and it is “thus as a lion, or as a winged lion its allomorph, that the god Imdugud/Ninurta attacks his enemy.”⁴⁷³ In short, the leonine aspect(s) underscores the violent, terrifying, and warlike character of both Ningirsu/Ninurta and the Imdugud.⁴⁷⁴

It is Inanna/Ishtar, however, who “is the deity most frequently associated with the lion” and lioness.⁴⁷⁵ She is actually called both and the divine epithet *labbatu* or ^d*labbatu* (“Lioness/Divine Lioness”) is attested only of her.⁴⁷⁶ She is

⁴⁷¹ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 36; see further 28-38.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 36. Perhaps it would be better to posit both/and rather than either/or.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁷⁴ See Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 66.

⁴⁷⁵ Lewis, “CT 13.33-34,” 44. See Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 39-52, 113-33 for a treatment of Ishtar. Brown attempts to show that “it is to her aspect as a storm divinity that she too owes her hypostasis as the numinous lion” (39). Cf. 121-22 n. 37: “Ishtar is associated with the lioness for the same reason that she is associated with the bull....there can be little doubt that the reference to Inanna as a lion or bull rests upon the understanding of the goddess as a storm divinity.” Brown ties this bull and lion connection to their numinous roars that sound (?) like thunder (e.g., 122-25 n. 39). While it must be admitted that certain texts do mention bulls roaring, the noises made by such animals hardly approximate the full-throated vocalizations of lions in the wild (see Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 103-15, especially 106-10). Moreover, the great differences between these animals, above all the predatory dominance and carnivorous nature of the lion, must be kept in mind—as Brown herself realizes (“Symbolic Lions,” 122-25 n. 39). It seems, therefore, just as likely that the bull and lion represent *different* aspects or tenors that their use as metaphorical vehicles employs, exploits, and develops. Similarly, Inanna/Ishtar’s relationship to the storm, while plausible at many points (*ibid.*, especially 43-44), is hardly determinative in an exhaustive way for the goddess’ relationship with her lions. Certainly it is the nature of metaphors to work more broadly than a simple one-to-one correlation or substitution (see Chapter 1 §1.2). In fairness to Brown, it should be noted that she is working almost exclusively with the earliest periods in Mesopotamian art and literature and many of her observations may, in fact, hold true there. Also, to her credit, she does admit of at least two traditions regarding Inanna/Ishtar’s lion: the lion as “a fallen adversary of the goddess” and as “a reference to her essentially stormy nature” (51).

⁴⁷⁶ CAD L, 23. Some lexical texts identify ^d*La-ba-tu* as Ishtar (Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 39). See further F. Thureau-Dangin, “Une tablette bilingue de Ras Shamra,” *RA* 37 (1940): 97-118; E. Puech, “Lioness 𐎶𐎵𐎶𐎶,” in *DDD*, 525; *TDOT*, 1:379; and Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, 154. Note also the pertinent PNs, GNs, and DN: *Si-la-ba-at*, *Eš4-tār-la-ba*, *Ištar-lā-ba*, URU *Kar-d Si-la-bat*, ^d*Si-la-bat/bāt/ba-at*, *Innin/Ÿ4/Yarru-la-ba*, *La-ba-ilum* (see CAD L, 23; *AHW* 1:524, 526; Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 40, 113 n. 6). See also §4.3.3.1 above for lion PNs.

often called “lioness Ištar,”⁴⁷⁷ and in a hymnic passage she is celebrated as “the famous one, the lioness among the Igigi, who subdues the angry gods.”⁴⁷⁸ Lest the last reference mislead, Inannna/Ishtar is typically not portrayed as a peacemaker! On the contrary, it is her martial aspects that are emphasized by the lion imagery. So, she is “the fierce lioness of the foothills who enters the road snapping, [t]he lady, the great wild bull, noble lioness, nothing opposes her”;⁴⁷⁹ the “lion of battle who charges all the enemy lands”; and the “great storm, lion of heaven, goddess Inanna, great storm, lion of heaven.”⁴⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, it is her leonine roar that is often stressed: she “roar[s] at the earth like thunder, no vegetation can stand up” to her;⁴⁸¹ she “roared like a lion in heaven and on the earth, and upsets the people.”⁴⁸² At other times, it seems to be the predatory aspect that receives attention as the goddess is described as a “lion that stalks over the meadow,”⁴⁸³ or, elsewhere, as a “raging lion.”⁴⁸⁴ There is no doubt, therefore, that Emile Puech is correct when he writes that “[t]he lion(ess) symbolizes the military character of the goddess Ishtar.”⁴⁸⁵

Given the disparity between Egyptian and Mesopotamian religious iconography noted above, depictions of Inanna/Ishtar as a lion are few, however, if any. One possible exception may be an Early Dynastic vase from the temple of Inanna at Nippur. The vase shows a feline (lion or leopard?) fighting a large serpent and carries the inscription “Inanna and the Serpent.”⁴⁸⁶ “In other words, Inanna, in the form of a feline, is dueling the mythological serpent.”⁴⁸⁷ Perhaps the much later (Neo-Assyrian period) lion-shaped orthostats—unusual for the period⁴⁸⁸—that guard the entrance to the temple of

⁴⁷⁷ As in the Old Babylonian hymn of Agušaya (*inuḫ ipšaḫ libbaša la-ba-tu Ešdar*: “she calmed down, her heart quieted down, the lioness, Ištar”; *CAD L*, 23, citing *RA* 15 181 vi.24; cf. Puech, “Lioness לִבְיָאָה,” 525; *AHw* 1:524). Cf. ^d*Enlil p%u pušamma izzakkar ana la-ba-tim Ištar* (“Enlil opened his mouth and spoke to the lioness, Ištar” (*CAD L*, 23, citing *CT* 15 6 vii.5; *AHw* 1:524; Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 39-40). See also *CAD L*, 23 for *la-ba-tu In-nin-na* (*PBS* 1/1 2:54).

⁴⁷⁸ *š-pūtu la-ab-bat Igigē mukannišat ilē šabs-ti*; *CAD L*, 23, citing *STC* 2 pl. 77:31; *AHw* 1:524; Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 40.

⁴⁷⁹ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 45.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 17, 92 nn. 11-12.

⁴⁸¹ See Lewis, “*CT* 13.33-34,” 44. The context of the citation (from the Exaltation of Inanna) mentions Inanna riding upon an UR, perhaps best translated “lion” here (see 44 n. 124). Cf. also *BWL*, 192-193:14-18 and 334 for similar land-withering language associated with the lion-like roar but in a quite different context.

⁴⁸² *TDOT*, 1:379; Heimpel, *Tierbilder*, 283-84.

⁴⁸³ *TDOT*, 1:380.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ištar la-ab-bu nadru*; *AHw* 1:526, citing *AGH* 132, 51.

⁴⁸⁵ Puech, “Lioness לִבְיָאָה,” 525.

⁴⁸⁶ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 45: “^dInanna and ^dMUŠ.”

⁴⁸⁷ Lewis, “*CT* 13.33-34,” 45.

⁴⁸⁸ Holly Pittman suggests that they are likely imported from highland Iran (personal communication).

Ishtar at Nimrud (see §4.5.1 and **fig. 4.298** below) are later reflexes evidencing an awareness of this type of connection.

Whatever the precise implications of the Nimrud orthostats, it is certain that leonine symbols were sometimes used to represent Mesopotamian deities. The double-lion club (**fig. 4.223**) is a divine symbol from Ur III onward. It is especially common in the *kudurrus* of the 14th–12th centuries (**fig. 4.281**), and is apparently a symbol for Ninurta, though it also appears in the hand of the goddesses Ishtar, Ištar, and Anat.⁴⁸⁹ Standards depicting lions, sometimes with a disk on their backs, are probably symbols of Ningirsu (**fig. 4.282**).⁴⁹⁰ The (single-)lion-scepter, also common on the *kudurrus*, was apparently the symbol of Nergal.⁴⁹¹

4.4.3.3. *Hatti*. The Hittite gods associated with the lions are just that: they are associated with, not depicted as, lions.⁴⁹² There is one famous exception, which is only partially leonine. It is the “dagger god” depicted in the rock reliefs at Yazilikaya (**fig. 4.283**). Gurney argued—largely because of the head that surmounts the dagger—against the perspective that the image represented a trophy of war captured from Syria or Mitanni. This same type of head and overall presentation can be found in the human-and-lion-headed “sphinx” creatures elsewhere in Hittite art (e.g., **fig. 4.284**). It was more likely, in Gurney’s view, that the dagger-god represented some sort of underworld deity.⁴⁹³ The militaristic elements should not be missed, however; hence, Keel has posited that the figure “symbolizes Nergal, the god of war and of the nether world.”⁴⁹⁴

Outside of this example there is no clear evidence of a Hittite god portrayed leontomorphically. Recently, Collins has argued that the Hattic weather-god Waššezzili, who was described both as a lion-king and as a lion,⁴⁹⁵ might be identified with the Hittite weather god of Zippalanda, a major figure in the Hittite pantheon.⁴⁹⁶ The evidence for such an identification is

⁴⁸⁹ *TDOT*, 1:379, 381.

⁴⁹⁰ Van Buren, *Symbols of the Gods*, 39–40; *TDOT*, 1:379. Ningirsu was associated with Ninurta (see above and Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 138, 142–43). For the lion with both, see Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 19–27. Brown also sees the human-headed lion in Early Dynastic glyptic as another representation of Ninurta (53–57).

⁴⁹¹ *TDOT*, 1:379.

⁴⁹² But cf. V. Haas’s work on the leopard: “Leopard und Biene im Kulte ‘hethitischer’ Göttinnen,” *UF* 13 (1981): 101–16.

⁴⁹³ Gurney, *The Hittites*, 168.

⁴⁹⁴ Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 238; so also Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 63. Cf. also Güterbock, “A Votive Sword,” 198.

⁴⁹⁵ “You are a lion-king” (UR.MAœ LUGAL-*uš zi-ik*); “you are a lion” (UR.MAœ-*aš zi-i- / [k...]*). For the texts see Collins, “œattušili I,” 19–20 and nn. 27–28.

⁴⁹⁶ Collins, “œattušili I,” 19–20 and n. 29.

rather meager, however, and more cannot be said given the paucity of the textual references.⁴⁹⁷

4.4.3.4. *The Levant*. Unfortunately, the Levantine evidence portraying deities as lions is also rather limited. Happily, there is an important instance of such a presentation in a description of Mot among the Ugaritic tablets (*KTU* 1.5 I.12b–15a):⁴⁹⁸

<i>t^m . bn ilm mt.</i>	the message of Mot, the son of El;
<i>hwt . ydd . bn⁴⁹⁹ il⁵⁰⁰zr.</i>	the word of the beloved (son) of El, the hero:
<i>pnps⁵⁰⁰ . nps . lbim thw</i>	“My appetite is that of a desert lion”

The passage is obviously metaphorical and quite brief, but its significance grows in the light of additional texts. Mitchell Dahood, for instance, compared the description of Mot in *KTU* 1.4 VIII.17b–20,⁵⁰¹ which portrays Mot wanting to devour Baal like a lamb in his mouth.⁵⁰² It may be, then, that the lion was

⁴⁹⁷ One might also note the essay by Alexander H. Krappe, “The Anatolian Lion God,” *JAOS* 65 (1945): 144–54, which attempts to argue for the existence of an Anatolian lion god on the basis of a number of later, fragmentary sources and connections. Even if Krappe’s sources hold up, his conclusions must remain tentative. Even if correct, however, it in no way obviates the main points argued in this study, as it would be simply additional evidence for the portrayal of deities as leonine in various parts of the ancient Near East, in this specific case, Anatolia.

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. also *KTU* 1.133 lines 1–4: *wy^hny . bn ilm . mt . npsm nps . lbim thw* (“and the son of El, Mot, answered: “My appetite is that of a desert lion”). The passage is quite similar to, and may be a variant version of, the *KTU* 1.5 text (so Mark S. Smith in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* [ed. Simon B. Parker; SBLWAW 9; Atlanta: Scholars, 1997], 177; but cf. Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* [SBLWAW 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002], 211).

⁴⁹⁹ *KTU*, 22 n. 2 suggests *bn* here is unnecessary. So also G. del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas de Canaan segun la Tradicion de Ugarit: Textos, Versión y Estudio* (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1981), 214; and *CML*, 68.

⁵⁰⁰ Written: *pnps*. An error for *pnps* (so del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas*, 214; *KTU*, 22).

⁵⁰¹ *al . y^hdkm kimr . bph klli . b^hbrn qnh . t^htan*. Cf. also *KTU* 1.6 II.22–23: *ldbnn ank . <k>imr . bpy klli . b^hbrn q<n>y . <n>j tu hw*.

⁵⁰² See Mitchell Dahood, “The Etymology of *MAL TA^hOT* (Ps 58,7),” *CBQ* 17 (1955): 180–83; idem, *Psalms II: 51–100: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 17; New York: Doubleday, 1968), 61. Dahood actually argues that the passage should be emended by redividing *b^hbrn qnh* and reading *q* as *th* (hence: *b^hbr nt^hnh t^htan*). He then translates: “Lest he [Mot] make you like a lamb in his mouth, like a kid you be crushed by the grinding of his teeth” (“The Etymology,” 183). The difference between *q* and the *th*-combination is slight, and Dahood states that in the cuneiform of *KTU* 1.4 there “is a very slight opening between” the two letters (ibid.). However, he has not been followed by *CML*, 67; del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas*, 211; nor Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 113, perhaps because the redivision/combination must occur across two different lines (*KTU* 1.4 VIII.19–20; this is not the case with *KTU* 1.6 II.22 but Dahood does not discuss the latter passage). Whatever the case, A. H. Konkel (*NIDOTTE*, 1:606) has compared this imagery with that used of Sheol in Isa 5:14, Hab 2:5 (!), Deut 33:20, and Hos 13:8.

part of Mot's overall imagery.⁵⁰³ If so, it would be especially noteworthy that the lion played a role in the dangerous and predatory aspects of the god of death.⁵⁰⁴

A few other references from Ugaritic literature, unfortunately not as transparent, may also relate to the lion. The term *lbu* occurs in *KTU* 1.24 line 30, though its precise interpretation is controverted.⁵⁰⁵ Perhaps Harhab is flattering Yarij by calling him "Lion."⁵⁰⁶ N. Wyatt takes the term to be an epithet of Athtar, which makes sense since Athirat is often portrayed on or in the company of lions.⁵⁰⁷ The iconography is well known and has been discussed above, but may receive ancillary textual support in light of the formula *w^{brt} aryh*, which is frequently applied to Athirat's children (*bnh*).⁵⁰⁸ This can be translated: "and the band of her kindred,"⁵⁰⁹ or the like, as *ary* is often taken to be a term for "kinsfolk."⁵¹⁰ But Dahood has raised the possibility

⁵⁰³ On *KTU* 1.5 I.23, which finds Mot using the term *aryy* (parallel with *ajy*), see below.

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 531. On the *KTU* 1.5 passage, note Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 116-17 n. 11 which attempts to tie *lbim* to maritime imagery, especially via Ahiqar Saying 34 (on which see note 78 above).

⁵⁰⁵ *KTU* 1.24 line 29b-30a: *bt [a]bh /bu y^{rr}*.

⁵⁰⁶ So Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 529.

⁵⁰⁷ Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 339 and n. 21; so also Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, 154. Also pertinent to this discussion is that Mark S. Smith has read *KTU* 1.2 III.20, a statement ascribed to Athtar, as: *lb^{um}.l^{ard}.bn[p]šny* (*The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, Vol. 1: *Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1-1.2* [VTSup 55; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994], 211, 217), and translated: "(Like) a lion I will descend with my desire" (219). However, in his discussion, Smith notes that the colon is "exceptionally problematic" (253) and that most editions, including *KTU* (lbdm) and del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas*, 168 (lbdm.t) are against him (Smith, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 253 n. 70; cf. Pls. 25, 34 for the tablet). Although it is true that *KTU* 1.5 may be pertinent, Smith admits that "[t]he sense of the metaphor in 1.2 III 20, if the line is understood correctly, is unclear" (254). This is clearly a major problem for any who would follow his lead. While it is, in fact, "possible that *lb^u* may be a title of Athtar which reflects his martial character" (254 and n. 71)—and this would be of some significance for the present study—it should be noted that the specific use of *yrd* with lion imagery is unattested, at least for the Hebrew material (see Appendix 2). This fact, along with other contextual matters, would have to be addressed before *KTU* 1.2 III.20 could be taken into serious consideration as a leonine passage.

⁵⁰⁸ E.g., *KTU* 1.4 IV.49-50; 1.6 I.40-41; cf. 1.3 V.37: *w^{brt}.arj^h* (to be corrected to *w^{brt} aryh*; see *KTU*, 14 n. 7). The phrase might also be restored in 1.4 I.8 (so *KTU*; Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 90) and, less certainly, 1.117 line 4 (so Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 414). Note the first person version in 1.4 II.25-26: *ṣl^{brt}.aryy*.

⁵⁰⁹ See Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (HSM 5; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 17.

⁵¹⁰ See Segert, *Basic Grammar*, 180; *CML*, 142; del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas*, 518; *UT*, 366; G. del Olmo Lete and J. Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la Lengua Ugarítica* (2 vols.; Aula Orientalis-Supplementa 7-8; Barcelona: Editorial AUSA, 1996-2000), 1:54.

that *ary* might be an animal designation for “nobles” or “warriors.”⁵¹¹ If so, this band might be Athirat’s “pride of lions” (?)⁵¹²—a term that would underscore this goddess’ connection to the lion(s), but also, and equally as significant, a possible leonine designation for her children. If so, the same would hold true of Baal, as similar language is used of his “brothers.”⁵¹³

Additionally, there are the Ugaritic PNs already mentioned in §4.3.3.1. It is not entirely clear which deity (or deities) is referred to in these epithets.⁵¹⁴ Despite that, “the circumstance that the elements *lb̄lu* and *lb̄lit* occur in theophoric personal names betrays the existence of a more positive use of this [leonine] metaphor, comparable to Yarikhu’s flattering epithet.”⁵¹⁵ In short, the lion image was also positively appropriated at Ugarit, as elsewhere.⁵¹⁶

Apart from the Ugaritic material, evidence from the Levant is meager. From further south, on the island of Arwad, there are the reliefs in the sanctuary of Baal Shamem, “which perhaps point to a triad: the bull (Baal Shamem), the cypress (the local *ʾAstarte*), and the lion (the young god).”⁵¹⁷ Still further south and inland, at Baalbek, it appears that the ancestral god was

⁵¹¹ Mitchell Dahood, “The Value of Ugaritic for Textual Criticism,” *Bib* 40 (1959): 161-62 n. 2. See also Miller, *The Divine Warrior*, 186 n. 31; and idem, “Animal Names as Designations in Ugaritic and Hebrew,” *UF* 2 (1970): 177-78. See further Appendix 1.

⁵¹² Maier, *ʾAŠERAH*, 167.

⁵¹³ See *KTU* 1.4 V.29, VI.44 (both parallel to *aj*). Note also 1.12 II.47 (of El; parallel to *aj*) and 1.17 I.19, 21; II.15 (of Danel; parallel to *aj*).

⁵¹⁴ See the discussion above as well as the discussion of the el-Khadr arrowheads in Chapter 3 (fig. 3.158). Additionally, note Steve A. Wiggins, “The Myth of Asherah: Lion Lady and Serpent Goddess,” *UF* 23 (1991): 387, who argues that *lb̄it* is not Asherah because, while the leonine connections of Asherah lie *through* Qudshu/Qedeset, these are not the same goddess (390-91). Instead, Wiggins argues that the “lion lady” is Anat (391 n. 68; so also originally Cross, “The Origin,” *El* 8 [1967]: 13*; contrast *CMHE*, 33). See further Chapter 5.

⁵¹⁵ Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 531, citing Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, 154. See also Muchiki, “The Unidentified God *PMY*,” 7-10, for the possibility that Phoenician and Punic theophoric names bearing this element go back to a leonine god referent.

⁵¹⁶ Note, additionally, the inscribed lion-head (13th century) from Ugarit. See Yigael Yadin, “New Gleanings on Reseph from Ugarit,” in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (ed. Ann Kort and Scott Morschauser; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 259-74, especially fig. 1. The inscription reads: *pn arw dš̄ly n̄rn \bn agp̄r/ l r̄šp gn* (*KTU* 6.62). See M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, “Das Löwengesicht-Gefäß *KTU* 6.62 (RS 25.318),” *UF* 23 (1991): 83-84, who translate: “Löwengesicht-Gefäß, das Nrn, Sohn des Agp̄r, dem Rešep-*gn* dargebracht hat” (83; contrast Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, 126, who thinks that the PN *bn agp̄r* should be kept separate from the rest of the inscription [they are on two different lines with a horizontal mark between them] and that it represents the name of the potter who made the piece; *n̄rn* then refers to the offerer). Dietrich and Loretz point out that, as there is no opening in the object, “ist es jedenfalls kein Rhyton” (83). Yadin thought it was a rhyton and argued that the leonine connection to Resheph ran through his consort, probably Anat (“New Gleanings,” 273).

⁵¹⁷ *TDOT*, 1:381.

worshipped in the form of a lion.⁵¹⁸ The material from ancient Israel/Palestine (LBA–Persian Period) has already been surveyed in Chapter 3. It is worth adding to that discussion, however, that Menakhem Shuval has posited a development in the glyptic iconography of a particular lion image. He argues that the presentation that first presents two gods mounted on two animals, a lion and a long-eared animal (cf. **figs. 3.47–48**), develops into the presentation with one god on a long-eared animal with two lions, one above the other.⁵¹⁹ If Shuval has correctly analyzed this evolution, the upper lion would represent—at least at one point in the history of the imagery—a deity of some sort.⁵²⁰

Before concluding this section, brief mention should be made of the evidence from other locales that do not fall within the four main regions outlined above (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Hatti, and the Levant), but which nevertheless may be of interest in the broader pursuit of the god(s) as lion(s) in the ancient Near East. To cite but one example, there is some evidence that the pre-Islamic tribe of the Maʿlij in the area of Yemen worshiped an Arabian lion-god named Yaghut (𐩦𐩣𐩬𐩪𐩥).⁵²¹

4.4.4. Ritual Lions

The material discussed above has provided ample evidence that the lion was frequently employed as an image for and with deities. It is, therefore, appropriate to say that the lion belonged generally to the sphere of the divine. This general “belonging” explains why the lion is frequently found as a motif in various seals or ritual objects depicting the gods, worship, or cultic scenes (e.g., **fig. 4.285**). It is thus not surprising to find throughout the ancient Near East a plethora of lion-shaped objects that were apparently used in cultic or ritual contexts. These include rhyta, bowls,⁵²² and other vessels (**fig. 4.286**), as well as objects of less certain use.⁵²³ The fact that such ritual objects were

⁵¹⁸ See W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites: The Fundamental Institutions* (New York: Schocken, 1972), 444–45.

⁵¹⁹ Shuval in *Studien III*, 100 and figs. 065–067.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 99; cf. also 100 and figs. 068–069.

⁵²¹ See the Koran, Sura 71:20–25. Cf. Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, 226 (also 37, 43). The name means “protector” or “he helps.” B. Becking (“Jaghut,” in *DDD*, 461–62) has argued that the DN is present in Nabataean and Thamudic PNs as the theophoric element 𐩦𐩣𐩬𐩪𐩥. The necessary switch from *j* to *h* makes Becking’s assessment problematic, however. For further information on the lion in Arabic sources, see Kindermann, “al-Asad,” 1:681–83.

⁵²² Especially the lion bowls from Hasanlu. See Ruth Amiran, “The Lion Statue and the Libation Tray from Tell Beit Mirsim,” *BASOR* 222 (1976): 29–40; O. W. Muscarella, “Lion Bowls from Hasanlu,” *Archaeology* 18 (1965): 41–46; *idem*, “The Third Lion Bowl from Hasanlu,” *Expedition* 16 (1974): 25–29; R. A. Stucky, “Vier löwenverzierte syrische Steatitgefäße,” *Berytus* 20 (1971): 11–24; and M. N. van Loon, “A Lion Bowl from Hasanlu,” *Expedition* 4 (1962): 14–19.

⁵²³ E.g., the inscribed lion-head from thirteenth-century Ugarit (see note 516 above). Note also the lion-shaped object from Persepolis that may have been a mold for drinking cups

frequently adorned with lions is largely due to the connections the lion has to the divine sphere. Already in early Mesopotamia the lion was “considered a receipient of m e—l a m, the peculiarly effulgent awesomeness which characterizes its bearer as more than human.”⁵²⁴

This lion/divine connection explains, in part, why leonine objects were often treated with special reverence and care. For example, an Old Babylonian text refers to the “(oil) for anointing the lion (made) of copper at the temple of Ištar.”⁵²⁵ There is, then, to use Brown’s words, “a virtual identification between cult paraphernalia and divinity”; “such an object can stand for the goddess herself.”⁵²⁶

The goddess of whom Brown speaks is, not surprisingly, Inanna/Ishtar, and it may well be the case that the curious phenomenon of Assyrian and Babylonian “lion-men” is also related to this goddess.⁵²⁷ Several examples of this type of individual(s) are known, especially from reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II (**fig. 4.287**) and Tiglath-Pileser III (**fig. 4.288**), but from other objects as well. Jeremy Black and Anthony Green have posited that the figure may be divine—perhaps the god La-tar%k (Sumerian: Lulal)⁵²⁸—though they admit that “it does not appear very likely, given his appearance and context (in a line of human figures, perhaps priests) that this could be the god himself.”⁵²⁹ Richard S. Ellis has made a strong case that this figure is not supernatural but should instead be understood as a human dressed in a lion mask and cloak.⁵³⁰ The context of the Ashurnasirpal and Tiglath-Pileser reliefs reflects a type of ceremony or celebration. In the former (**fig. 4.287**), two lion-men are apparently dancing while below them a eunuch receives a row of prisoners.⁵³¹ The latter relief (**fig. 4.288**) is unfortunately broken, but here the lion-man seems to be part of a procession in a composition that “may form part of a scene of tribute or

(Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, Pl. 46). For the lion in the Egyptian cult “de tous les jours,” see de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 404-407.

⁵²⁴ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 1.

⁵²⁵ *ana* URUDU.UR.MAœ ša É [DN] *paš%šim*, CAD N/2, 196, citing YOS 5 171:16.

⁵²⁶ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 49. Cf. also Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 54.

⁵²⁷ JoAnn Scurlock, “Animals in Ancient Mesopotamian Religion,” in Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World*, 369-70.

⁵²⁸ See Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 33-34, 116.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, 34. Gods in lion-skins are known. Heracles comes to mind, but see also Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, Pl. XXc, e, for two Akkadian seals with the same motif. Richard S. Ellis, “‘Lion-Men’ in Assyria,” in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 19; Hamden, CT: Archon, 1977), 73 mentions several texts in the Erra-Epic (specifically, I:34; III:22; IV:21) that mention the gods (either one of the ^d*Sibitti* or Erra himself) assuming the “guise of a lion” (*z%m labbi*).

⁵³⁰ See Ellis, “Lion-Men,” 67-78.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

triumph.”⁵³² But even if the figure is a human in lion garb—and in my judgment, Ellis is correct on this point—questions remain: what might this figure represent, who might he be, and what might he be doing? Reade believes the person in the Tiglath-Pileser reliefs is “probably a soldier.”⁵³³ He compares the image from Ashurnasirpal’s palace—and mentions another from the time of Esarhaddon—and speculates that “the lion-skin mummery was perhaps a traditional act, immediately after battle.”⁵³⁴ If so, it would probably have

honoured Ishtar, the goddess of fertility and of human passion as expressed both in love and in war. Her animal was the lion, and various documents refer to people wearing lion skins or lions masks at Ishtar festivals in different parts of the ancient Middle East.⁵³⁵

Ellis is more cautious, but his results do not preclude Reade conclusions. He adds that the find-context of at least one of the lion-men objects suggests an apotropaic function; this receives additional support by the whip that the figure often holds because such whips are frequently mentioned in exorcisms.⁵³⁶ As Ellis is quick to note, these “two functions—exorcism and cultic ceremonial—are not mutually exclusive.”⁵³⁷ The lion-cloaked figures that dance on Ashurnasirpal’s relief could, for instance, be “performing a ritual to exorcise the ghosts of the enemy dead.”⁵³⁸ The connection with military scenes and the reception of prisoners-of-war (as in **fig. 4.287**) may further suggest that lion-men were employed in rituals pertaining to this type of event. If so, the lion-garb (and whip) might have been intentionally chosen to underscore the military dominance of the victorious Assyrians. Yet even if this was the case, such a suggestion should not neglect the lion-cloaked figure’s association with the divine realm. Here again it comes as no surprise that at least one seal seems to connect the lion-man with Ishtar, the leonine war-goddess, enthroned on her lion familiar (**fig. 4.289**).⁵³⁹

While it remains somewhat uncertain whether these “lion-men” were cult functionaries and, if so, what exactly their cultic/ritual function was, there is no doubt that lions played important roles in various rituals. The use of the lion in rites and objects for the dead in ancient Egypt has already been noted: lions carry the bier and watch over the deceased, as well as guard the doors of the

⁵³² Ibid. Reade also thinks it is part of a victory celebration (in *Art and Empire*, 62). Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, 169, who says the relief is from a “[r]eligious ceremony” and thinks that the figure “possibly impersonates some demon of disease.”

⁵³³ Reade in *Art and Empire*, 62.

⁵³⁴ Ibid. R. D. Barnett, “Lions and Bulls in Assyrian Palaces,” in *Le palais et la royauté* (ed. P. Garelli; Paris: P. Geuthner, 1974), 441–46, especially 443, has also seen a connection between these figures and victory in war.

⁵³⁵ Reade in *Art and Empire*, 62.

⁵³⁶ Ellis, “Lion-Men,” 73–75. Note fig. 4 where the lion-man has replaced Pazuzu in a typical Lamaštu-plaque scene.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 75.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ See *ibid.*, 74–76 for additional connections to Ishtar.

underworld.⁵⁴⁰ Mesopotamian religion also put the lion to use in various religious ceremonies. Parts of the animal's body, skin, hair, and so forth were used in both medicine and rituals.⁵⁴¹ Indeed, some of the ritual texts explicitly mention lions.⁵⁴²

4.5. THE LION AS GUARDIAN OF THE GATE, TEMPLE, PALACE

The association of the lion with different monarchs and deities explains in part the widespread use of the lion as an architectural-decorative element in both palace and temple, especially at doorways.⁵⁴³ Certainly another element explaining such usage is, again, the lion's predatory dominance.⁵⁴⁴ As already noted, the power of the lion could be oriented in at least two main directions: as threat focused *inwardly*, toward the subject, or as threat focused *outwardly*, away from the subject and toward the subject's enemies. This latter direction—in which the lion serves as an apotropaic figure—is the focus of this section. Again, while regional developments and variations are indubitably of great import, for the present purposes it is enough to highlight the ubiquity of the lion as guardian of temple, gate, and palace throughout the areas and periods under investigation and to conclude with some general comments on this phenomenon.

4.5.1. Temple

Brown notes that, for Mesopotamia, the lion is

closely associated...with the temple. It acts the guardian. It plays the gatekeeper. In the earliest periods its leonine nature is infused into the sacred building. The literatur[e] of the Akkadian period abounds with examples of the lion as a virtual "kenning" for the temples of various gods.⁵⁴⁵

As examples of the latter point, Brown notes that many Sumerian temples are actually called lions. Eanna at Uruk is a "lion, laying on its paws"; E-Ulmash is a "lion falling upon a wild bull"; Eninnu is "a fierce lion, grasping a wild lion about the neck";⁵⁴⁶ and Ishkur's temple is "a fullgrown lion which strikes

⁵⁴⁰ See further de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens*, 173-85; cf. 412-19; *TDOT*, 1:379.

⁵⁴¹ See *CAD* N/2, 196-97.

⁵⁴² Note ^dUR.MAœ.MEŠ in the *t̃*kultu-ritual cited in *CAD* N/2, 196 (citing BiOr 18 199 i.53); and 2 NA₄.MEŠ UR.MAœ.MEŠ: "two (precious) stones (as gifts to) the lions" in a Middle Assyrian ritual (*CAD* N/2, 196, citing MVAG 41/3 10 ii.9). A Neo-Assyrian letter mentions carrying a lion's head to the palace (*CAD* N/2, 196, citing ABL 366:11)—perhaps also reflecting a ritual of some sort (?).

⁵⁴³ For a summary of the pertinent Assyrian texts, see Burkhard J. Engel, *Darstellungen von Dämonen und Tieren in assyrischen Palästen und Tempeln nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (Mönchengladbach: Günther Hackbarth Verlag, 1987), 55-68.

⁵⁴⁴ Cf. Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 77.

⁵⁴⁵ Brown, "Symbolic Lions," 1.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 67-68, 168-69 nn. 2, 3, 4, 6; cf. also 125-27 n. 40.

terror.”⁵⁴⁷ One might recall the archaeological evidence from the Uruk period, already mentioned above (§4.3.1.1), that indicated that a young lion’s paws were buried in the foundation deposit of the White Temple at Warka (cf. **fig. 4.95**). Brown thinks such a ceremony was designed to infuse “leonine numinosity into the temple” with the result being fertility.⁵⁴⁸

While fertility may partially explain leonine metaphors for the temple, it does not sufficiently explain the significance of lions in architectural contexts of the temple.⁵⁴⁹ In the case of the latter, it is much more likely that the lions are apotropaic given their strategic location at gateways and doorways, as well as their orientation within such portals. Most scholars agree on this point whether the context is Egyptian⁵⁵⁰ or Mesopotamian.⁵⁵¹

The practice of placing leonine figures in key architectural contexts is quite early and can be traced with relative consistency thereafter. One notes the spotted feline (perhaps a leopard) on the late fourth/early third-millennium altar at Tell Ḥuqair (**fig. 4.290**). Roughly contemporaneous are the monumental Early or Pre-Dynastic lions from Koptos, on the west side of the Wadi Hammamat in Upper Egypt.⁵⁵²

In the mid-third millennium, the temple of Ninhursag at al-Ḥubaid was flanked by bitumen lions,⁵⁵³ whereas the entrances to the valley temple of Khafre (Dynasty 4) were flanked by either lions or sphinxes.⁵⁵⁴ Towards the end of this millennium, Enki’s temple (E-abzu) at Eridu was flanked by colossal lions that guarded its entrance (**fig. 4.291**).⁵⁵⁵

The early second-millennium temple of Nisaba and Hani at Tell Harmal was also flanked by guardian lions (**fig. 4.292**).⁵⁵⁶ While these figures are rather imposing given their gaping, roaring mouths and prominent teeth and

⁵⁴⁷ Heimpel, *Tierbilder*, 307; *TDOT*, 1:379.

⁵⁴⁸ Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 72; cf. 78.

⁵⁴⁹ Though it must be admitted that these guardian lions are often used in temples of fertility deities.

⁵⁵⁰ See, e.g., Aldred, *The Egyptians*, 105-106; idem, *Egyptian Art*, 146. Schweitzer has contested the guardian function of at least some lion/sphinx figures (see *Löwe und Sphinx*, 34, 36, 49-50), but “her contentions have...failed to gain any acceptance” (Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 363 n. 28).

⁵⁵¹ Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 220.

⁵⁵² See Barbara Adams, “The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London,” *BA* 47 (1984): 240-44, especially the figs. on 242. See further idem and R. Jaeschke, *The Koptos Lions* (Contributions in Anthropology and History 3; Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1984).

⁵⁵³ Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 63.

⁵⁵⁴ Aldred, *Egyptian Art*, 62.

⁵⁵⁵ The vertical orientation of the lion might be compared to the lion figure on the stela from Rujm el-Ḥabd (**fig. 4.224**). See further Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 119 for textual references to Inanna and Enki wherein they drink “in front of the lions”—perhaps a reference to these orthostats.

⁵⁵⁶ Note also the lions from eighteenth-century Haradum. See Breniquet, “Animals in Mesopotamian Art,” 161 and 162 fig. 4.11.

fangs, the same cannot be said for the bronze lions that guarded the temple of Dagan at Mari (**fig. 4.293**),⁵⁵⁷ though it must be admitted that the effect of such figures on ancient viewers must have been different than the impression created now.⁵⁵⁸ Also from the Old Babylonian period is a terracotta plaque with a deified king or warrior-god over a temple façade with lions on it (**fig. 4.294**). This piece adds additional confirmation—from a different and smaller medium—that the lion was utilized in architectural contexts such as these.

Most of the lion guardians are monumental and their use continued throughout the second millennium. From the latter half of that millennium come the lion orthostats from Alalakh (**fig. 4.295**). These flanked a palace or a temple—“presumably the latter,” in Frankfort’s opinion.⁵⁵⁹ Whatever the case at Alalakh, there can be no doubt that the structure at ʔAin Dara is a temple and that it uses lions (and other animals) extensively in its architectural and decorative design.⁵⁶⁰ Lions are found everywhere: on either side of the staircase entering the temple (**fig. 4.296**); on the interior walls of the portico, guarding the entry to the antechamber; on each of the doorposts leading to the main hall; on the entrances to the side chambers; and on the exterior walls of the outer chambers.⁵⁶¹ John Monson takes this as evidence that the artisans worked from a “limited repertoire,”⁵⁶² but the extensive use of the lion nevertheless underscores its importance, especially if Monson is correct in attributing the temple to Ishtar.⁵⁶³ The ʔAin Dara temple is also significant because, of all Levantine temples, it is closest in both time and size to the Solomonic temple.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁵⁷ See the original study by André Parrot, “Les fouilles de Mari: Quatrième campagne (Hiver 1936-1937),” *Syria* 19 (1938): 1-29, especially 21-27, which has been surpassed, corrected, and clarified by Dominique Beyer, Claude Forrières, François Lemaire, and François Bargain, “Les lions du temple du ‘Roi du Pays’ de Mari,” in *MARI* 7 (1993): 79-105. Further information on the restoration of the lions can be found on 87-89 and in Claude Forrières and François Lemaire, “La restauration des lions de Mari,” in *Syrie, mémoire et civilisation* (ed. A. Caubet et al.; Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1993), 156-59.

⁵⁵⁸ Cf. Parrot, “Le fouilles de Mari,” 25. Breniquet, “Animals in Mesopotamian Art,” 161 speaks of them as “ready to pounce” and that the bronze overlay “should endow these objects with a shining aspect, emphasizing their terrifying behavior and their close relationship to the divine sphere.” Their relatively large size is also a factor to be considered.

⁵⁵⁹ Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 272.

⁵⁶⁰ The phases of the temple’s use run from 1300-740 according to its excavator. See Ali Abu Assaf, *Der Tempel von ʔAin Dara* (Damaszener Forschungen 3; Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1990); and also John Monson, “The New ʔAin Dara Temple: Closest Solomonic Parallel,” *BAR* 26, no. 3 (May/June 2000): 20-35, 67.

⁵⁶¹ Monson, “The New ʔAin Dara Temple,” 24, 27, 28, 29. For a structural plan, see 23.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 27. Monson follows Assaf in this attribution.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 30. Note also the famous way in which the temple graphically depicts the deity’s footprints together at the threshold, and then again, one at a time, within the temple itself, thus creating the impression that the deity strides into the temple structure.

Temples from the first millennium also employed the lion figure. From Tell Halaf is an orthostat of a rampant lion from the south wall of the Temple-Palace there, dating to ca. 900–850 (**fig. 4.297**). A cuneiform inscription in the upper left-hand corner reads: “Temple of the Weather God.”⁵⁶⁵ Perhaps the most famous orthostats of the first millennium are the massive lions that flanked the entrance to the temple of Ishtar at Nimrud (**fig. 4.298**).⁵⁶⁶ A contemporaneous ivory fragment from Nimrud captures the function of these lions and their positioning: the lions flank either side of a door or temple façade wherein a deity sits enthroned (**fig. 4.299**). Also from the 9th century is the double-lion base of a column from the temple of Tell Tayanat (**fig. 4.300**). Here the modelling of the lions and their vicious, open mouths stresses the threat they pose to enemies as well as the power they have to protect the environs. Two stelae from Tell Rimah (**fig. 4.301**) convey the same effect but with a fascinating twist: here the lion’s head is protruded from above and out of its mouth comes a huge sword. As the stelae flanked the entrance to the holy of holies in the temple of Adad built by Adad-narari III, perhaps the lion and the protruding sword are to be understood as attributes of the storm-god, representing Adad’s thunder and lightning.⁵⁶⁷ Finally, from the late Assyrian period come the well-known glazed-brick panels showing the lion (and other creatures), which flanked the entrance to palace temples at Khorsabad (**fig. 4.302**).⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁵ See Weiss, ed., *Ebla to Damascus*, 360.

⁵⁶⁶ Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 137, notes that use of the lion by itself is somewhat exceptional for this period, which preferred composite creatures.

⁵⁶⁷ So J.-G. Heintz, “Royal Traits and Messianic Figures: A Thematic and Iconographical Approach,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity: The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 52–66, especially 62–63. Note also Keel, *Song of Songs*, 127, 129.

⁵⁶⁸ The trend of using lions in temple contexts continued much later still. See Han J. W. Drijvers, “Sanctuaries and Social Safety: The Iconography of Divine Peace in Hellenistic Syria,” in *Commemorative Figures: Papers Presented to Dr. Th. P. van Baaren on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday, May 13, 1982* (Visible Religion: Annual for Religious Iconography 1; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 65–75. Drijvers discusses the large orthostat of a lion (see 74 Pl. 1) found in 1977 in the sanctuary of the Arab goddess Allât at Palmyra (dating to just before or after the turn of the eras). The lion’s left leg bears an inscription reading “A[llât] will bless whoever will not shed blood in the sanctuary” (*tbrk ḥ [l] mn dy ḥ yšd dm ḥ ʿgbl*) (65; cf. 75 Pl. 2). The lion was Allât’s animal, frequently symbolizing her (66; cf. 67 and idem, “*De matre inter leones sedente*: Iconography and Character of the Arab Goddess Allât,” in *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren* [3 vols.; EPRO 68; ed. Margreet B. de Boer and T. A. Edridge; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978], 1:331–51). Drijvers understands the iconography and inscription together as indicating that the lion “protects” the antelope that appears between its legs (“Sanctuaries,” 65; cf. 67). But he admits that “[t]he inviolability of the place and its worshippers is guaranteed by her [the goddess’s] deterrent power symbolized by the huge lion” (69). In any event, the asylum function may have more to do with the specific goddess involved than with the lion proper.

4.5.2. Palace

The last item mentioned demonstrates that it is not always easy to distinguish temples from palaces. Or, to put it differently, temple-palace compounds were frequent in the ancient Near East as well as in the Levant proper.⁵⁶⁹ Hence, the division between the temple, on the one hand, and the palace, on the other, is somewhat artificial. Even so, the lion was frequently used in architecture that is distinctively royal, and, like the temple of the deity, the ruler's palace could also "roar like a lion."⁵⁷⁰ Furthermore, in the royal palace—as also in the god's temple—the purpose of the lion was largely, if not exclusively, apotropaic: "to protect the building from all dangers and intruders."⁵⁷¹

But, as already noted, apotropaism is two-sided: protection for the building or the building's residents means threat and danger for those outside—those who would, in turn, pose a threat or danger to the building or its residents. The fact that it is a lion that is frequently chosen for this apotropaic function and that, when it is, the lion is typically shown in its threatening aspects, further emphasizes the point. A rather vivid example is found in an orthostat found at Tell Halaf, in the portico of the ninth-century palace of Kapara (**fig. 4.303**). One of the (perhaps divinized royal) figures depicted there is standing on a lion, under which is a disembowled deer (**fig. 4.304**). Such a depiction makes explicit what is *always* implicit in such guardian figures—namely, "alles Böse von den Palästen und Tempeln fernzuhalten."⁵⁷² Those who will not keep away can expect to become the lion's next disembowled victim. So says the relief.

The Neo-Assyrian period witnessed the rise of the *shedu* or *lamassu*,⁵⁷³ first attested at the palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud.⁵⁷⁴ As composite creatures, they lie outside the focus of the present study, but it is nevertheless important to note that they typically had the form of either lions or bulls. Also of import is their colossal size, which actually increases throughout the period.⁵⁷⁵ Such colossi were usually placed at strategic locations.⁵⁷⁶ Their

⁵⁶⁹ See Monson, "The New ĠAin Dara Temple," 35 and the literature cited in 67 n. 9.

⁵⁷⁰ Cf. *šumma ekal rubī kama UR.MAœ irtamum*: "if the ruler's palace roars like a lion" (CAD N/2, 196, citing CT 39 33:55).

⁵⁷¹ Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 64 n. 49.

⁵⁷² Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*, 95.

⁵⁷³ See Wolfram von Soden, "Die Schutzgenien Lamassu und Schedu in der babylonisch-assyrischen Literatur," *BaghM* 3 (1964): 148-56.

⁵⁷⁴ Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," 64. See also Janusz Meuszynski, "Neo-Assyrian Reliefs from the Central Area of Nimrud Citadel," *Iraq* 38 (1976): 37-44. The use of such figures continues into the Persian Period (see Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, 51).

⁵⁷⁵ See Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 137.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 142. See further John Malcolm Russell, *Sennacherib's Palace Without Rival at Nineveh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and, more generally, *idem*, *The Writing on the Wall*.

placement is sometimes mentioned in associated inscriptions,⁵⁷⁷ and often confirmed by other artistic media (cf. **fig. 4.305**).⁵⁷⁸

The lion found its way into later periods in its “pure” form as well, as, for example, in the three guardian lions from the gates of Zinjirli. The lion on the left in **fig. 4.306** is from a gate built by Kilamuwa (ca. 830), which led into the court of the *bāt-hilani*; the lion on the right belongs to a colonnade built by Bir-R%kib, sometime after 730. It is similar to some Assyrian types, like those lions on the temple of Ninurta at Nimrud, and may be stylistically related to the lion-column base at Tell Tayanat and from the palace gate-lion at Sakjegözü (**fig. 4.307**). The middle lion in **fig. 4.306** was found between the outer and inner gates of the citadel at Zinjirli and is of uncertain date. But, whatever its exact provenience, it is noteworthy that at Zinjirli the gateway guardians are almost exclusively lions.

The Assyrian governor of Til Barsip installed two gate lions at the palace there at roughly the same time (ca. 770–760). He named them: “The impetuous storm, irresistible in attack, crushing rebels, procuring that which satisfies the heart” and “He who pounces on rebellion, scours the enemy, drives out the evil and lets enter the good.”⁵⁷⁹ Frankfort comments:

The last phrase recalls the apotropaic character of the device which had originally been reserved for temples. The Hittites of Boghazköy, the Assyrians, and finally the north Syrian princelings had adopted it to demonstrate their consciousness of power and to maintain alive among the people that fear which “satisfies the heart” of their rulers.⁵⁸⁰

Later periods also find the lion in palace contexts, notably in the glazed-brick frieze on the façade of Nebuchadnezzar’s throne room at Babylon (**fig. 4.308**) and in the palace of Darius I at Susa (**fig. 4.309**).

⁵⁷⁷ E.g., Tiglath-Pileser III’s Summary Inscription 7 rev. 29’-30’: “Lion colossi and bull colossi with very skillfully wrought features, clothed with splendour, I placed in the entrance and set up for display” (UR.MAœ.†MEŠ†¹ALÀD.MEŠ†¹LAMMA.MEŠ†¹ *ša bi-na-te ma-aš-diš(!) nu-uk-ku-lu hi-it-lu-pu ku-uz-bu né-re-bi ú-šá-aš-bīt-mā*; H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III King of Assyria: Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translations and Commentary* [Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994], 174-75 [slightly altered]; cf. *CAD* N/2, 196). Esarhaddon also mentions making palaces with “[p]rotecting colossi of stone” to guard the entryways (see *ARAB*, 2:269 [§698]).

⁵⁷⁸ Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, 215 thinks that the Assyrians were inspired to create these figures “when they saw the smaller gateway figures of the Aramaeans and Neo-Hittites during their campaigns in Syria.” On this point one might compare Woolley, *Art of the Middle East*, 134, who posited that the “widely different styles” of the Alalakh orthostats suggested that they were “the first experiments in what was to be the characteristic adornment of Syro-Hittite architecture, adopted later by the Assyrians and the Persians.”

⁵⁷⁹ Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 300. See also Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 63-64; Parrot, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 77; Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 126.

⁵⁸⁰ Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, 300.

The pieces discussed thus far are from temple or palace portals; many more examples could be added to those already presented, including pieces from Malatya,⁵⁸¹ Marash,⁵⁸² Urartu,⁵⁸³ Göllüdag,⁵⁸⁴ Ankara,⁵⁸⁵ and Arslan Tash.⁵⁸⁶ The architectural find spots of these objects and, consequently, their attribution to a temple or palace is not always certain. But the frequency of these figures is undeniable and their function seems clear, especially given the inscriptions from Til Barsip. There are two lion orthostats that deserve special mention as they underscore this point in emphatic ways.

The first is the lion orthostat from Alaja Hüyük, dating from the empire period (**fig. 4.310**). It is a famous piece of Hittite monumental art, but the most interesting facet for the present discussion is how the lion is shown with its left front paw placed squarely on a small bull-calf. The latter is indubitably the lion's prey. It is located not only under the lion's paw but also under the lion's mouth, which is partially open in a snarl or growl. The calf is, as they say, "dead meat"!

The second orthostat, from Babylon, is also famous though unfortunately unfinished, and this has complicated its precise dating (**fig. 4.311**). This colossal statue was found in Babylon in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562). However, on the basis of its material (basalt) and its subject matter—which seems to depict the lion over a prone, human figure—some have argued that the piece is of early and non-Mesopotamian origin and was only later brought to Babylon.⁵⁸⁷ Indeed, the same combination of lion over prostrate human figure may be the subject of a poorly preserved orthostat from Alaja Hüyük.⁵⁸⁸ Of course, the existence of the two Nimrud ivories with a lioness pictured over a human (see **fig. 4.56**) shows that the motif was known in Babylonia and the orthostat might thus be a local product.⁵⁸⁹ Whatever its origin, the orthostat takes the implicit threat to the potential enemy of the temple/palace to its most logical and most graphic conclusion: the enemy (in

⁵⁸¹ Ca. 1050-850. See Akurgal, *Art of the Hittites*, Pl. 103; Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, fig. 271.

⁵⁸² 8th century. See Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, fig. 557.

⁵⁸³ See Veli Sevin, "An Urartian Lion from Gevas, Van," in *Aspects of Art and Iconography: Anatolia and its Neighbors: Studies in Honor of Nimet Özgüç* (ed. M. Mellink et al.; Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basmevi, 1993), 565-67. On the basis of similarities to Neo-Assyrian lions, Sevin dates the piece prior to Tiglath-Pileser III.

⁵⁸⁴ Ca. 700. See Akurgal, *Art of the Hittites*, Pl. 136.

⁵⁸⁵ Ca. 700. See Akurgal, *Art of the Hittites*, Pl. 137.

⁵⁸⁶ 8th century. See Parrot, *Nineveh*, fig. 33; H. T. Norris, "Arslan Tash (Rock of the Lion)," *EQ* 83 (1951): 168-74 and Pl. XVIII; Pauline Albenda, "The Gateway and Portal Stone Reliefs from Arslan Tash," *BASOR* 271 (1988): 5-30.

⁵⁸⁷ See, e.g., Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, 392 n. 44; Parrot, *Nineveh*, 179. For a detailed study, see Herbert Tomandl, "Zur Thematik des 'Löwen von Babylon,'" *AfO* 33 (1986): 55-64.

⁵⁸⁸ See Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, 233 and 392 nn. 43-44.

⁵⁸⁹ See Parrot, *Nineveh*, 179; of course, the non-Babylonian influences on the Nimrud ivories should not be overlooked (see the discussion at **fig. 4.56**).

the main, a *human* foe) of the guarded area must beware—they may be the lion's prey ere long!

4.5.3. City Gateways

The lion as guardian of the gate was not restricted to temple or palace contexts. In certain instances the lion was placed at the gateways to the city itself or to important portals within the city. One of the most famous of these is the Lion Gate at Hattusas/Bogazköy (**fig. 4.312**). Here also the function was probably “to keep evil influences and evil men at bay.”⁵⁹⁰ Equally famous but much later in provenance is the processional street that runs from the Ishtar gate at Babylon (**fig. 4.313**). The lions on the walls bordering this street are six feet in length and it has been estimated that originally there were as many as 120 of these lions lining the walls.⁵⁹¹ The connections between the lions and the goddess of the gate, Ishtar, are not to be missed,⁵⁹² but it is also significant that in contexts like this the lion lends its protective force to the entirety of the city.⁵⁹³ The importance of such guardian lions receives still further support from the observation that at some sites they were occasionally ritually buried.⁵⁹⁴

4.5.4. Other

It is not suprising to find that the lion was used as a guardian figure in other contexts as well. The lion's role in funerary art—especially in Egypt—has already been noted. A further, non-Egyptian, example is found in the Ahiṛam sarcophagus (**fig. 4.314**).⁵⁹⁵ This tradition of placing lions on sarcophagi endured well into the Greco-Roman period,⁵⁹⁶ and it may very well be that the lion was the original “flesh-eater.”

Lions also played a protective function on amulets; this, too, has already been mentioned. Yet one final fascinating use of the lion as guardian is found in the two foundation deposit figures of Tišatal, king of Urkish in the late

⁵⁹⁰ J. G. Macqueen, *The Hittites and Their Contemporaries in Asia Minor* (rev. and enlarged ed.; London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 73.

⁵⁹¹ *ANEP*, 339.

⁵⁹² Cf. Bill T. Arnold, “Babylonians,” in *Peoples of the Old Testament World* (ed. Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 43–75, specifically 63.

⁵⁹³ Note the gate in Neo-Babylonian Sippar named KÁ.UR.MAĀ.MEŠ (*CAD* N/2, 196, citing 82-7-14,1814:16).

⁵⁹⁴ See David Ussishkin, “The Syro-Hittite Ritual Burial of Monuments,” *JNES* 29 (1970): 124–28 and Pl. V (Zinjirli); and idem, “Observations on Some Monuments from Carchemish,” *JNES* 26 (1967): 87–92 and Pls. IX–XIII.

⁵⁹⁵ M. Haran, “The Bas-Reliefs on the Sarcophagus of Ahiṛam King of Byblos in the Light of Archaeological and Literary Parallels from the Ancient Near East,” *IEJ* 8 (1958): 15–25 has argued that the figure in these reliefs is not Ahiṛam but a god, perhaps Mot. If correct, it would have some bearing on the Ugaritic texts discussed above (§4.4.3.4).

⁵⁹⁶ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 64.

Akkadian period (**fig. 4.315**).⁵⁹⁷ The small lion on these pieces is well modeled, depicting a fierce, roaring visage. The lion's body rises up over a flat, rectangular plate on which it rests its paws. Ellis explains that "[t]he rectangular plate of the Louvre figure was evidently meant to rest on the stone tablet [of the foundation deposit inscription], which the lion would appear to protect with his menacing appearance."⁵⁹⁸ He continues: "[t]he intention appears to have been apotropaic; the lions were very likely meant to protect the inscriptions from any disturbance."⁵⁹⁹ Oscar W. Muscarella broadens the apotropaic function to include the temple as a whole, given the critical placement of these figures in the foundation deposit.⁶⁰⁰

To conclude this section, the matter of perspective or orientation should again be stressed. It is no accident that these guardian lions are typically placed at gates or doorways.⁶⁰¹ Such portals are architectural points defining entry and exit, inside and outside space. As one passes these guardian lion figures one moves from being threatened by the lion to being protected by that selfsame lion, having moved from the outside—the place of confrontation and threat—to the inside—the space that the lion dominates.⁶⁰² The dominated and protected space is typically the area *behind* the lion figures, though in some cases (e.g., the Urkish foundation deposits) that space is also *beneath* them. However, even when one is behind the lion, the threat the beast poses cannot be forgotten. The protection is, after all, predicated on that threat. That menacing threat lingers, therefore, and such an understanding of the lion's

⁵⁹⁷ See Richard S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (YNER 2; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 57; André Parrot and Jean Nougayrol, "Un document de foundation hurrite," *RA* 42 (1948): 1-20, figs. 1-4; André Parrot, "Acquisitions et inédits du musée du Louvre," *Syria* 31 (1954): 1-13, especially 11-13; Oscar W. Muscarella, "Comments on the Urkish Lion Pegs," in Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, *Mozan 1: The Soundings of the First Two Seasons* (Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 20; Malibu: Undena, 1988), 93-99; and Brown, "Symbolic Lions," 171 n. 14, who compares a clay lion of Merodach-baladan III from Warka.

⁵⁹⁸ Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 57.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75. He states that this interpretation "rests purely on speculation; I know of no textual support for it." However, the abundance of art-historical data makes this lack of textual confirmation a minor problem, at best. It is, in short, far from pure speculation.

⁶⁰⁰ Muscarella, "Comments on the Urkish Lion Pegs," 94.

⁶⁰¹ Another use was the lion as a waterspout. See the second-century example in Dorothy Kent Hill, "The Animal Fountain of ḫArâq el-Emîr," *BASOR* 171 (1963): 45-55. Such use was common in Greece, Rome, and in Egypt in earlier times (*ibid.*, 51 and nn. 9-10). This particular piece bears marked Greek influence though it is probably a local imitation (*ibid.*, 55). For a study of the popular motif of a lion with mouth ring/handle, see Otto Kurz, "Lion-Masks with Rings in the West and in the East," in *Studies in Art* (Scripta Hierosolymitana 24; ed. Moshe Barasch; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1972), 22-41.

⁶⁰² These ideas were first presented in Michael T. Davis and Brent A. Strawn, "Isaiah 31:4-5 in the Light of Lion Iconography of the Ancient Near East" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society Biblical Literature, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 1996). I am grateful for discussions with Davis on this point. See the related discussion in Chapter 2 (§2.3.4).

apotropaic space serves yet again to highlight the ambivalence that the lion's strength, power, and ferocity hold. Finally, in the light of the large orthostats from Alaja Hüyük and Babylon, it should be clear that the position *beneath* the lion is even more fraught with danger!

4.6. CONCLUSION

It remains to draw some conclusions, though this is difficult given the large body of evidence. Furthermore, it should be readily apparent that the evidence presented could have been even larger: many more objects could have been mentioned and discussed.⁶⁰³ Nevertheless, to respond to the question raised at the end of Chapter 2, it can now be stated that the ancient Near Eastern material also witnesses to the use of the lion with enemy/wicked, monarch/mighty one, and deity/deities. (Outside royal figures, the lion as the self/righteous is more muted it would seem.) Of course, a concerted effort has been made here to categorize the material under these rubrics; there is thus some degree of circularity. Moreover, it must be admitted that not every instance of lion imagery in the broader ancient Near Eastern context falls into the major rubrics laid out in this chapter. For instance, there exist what might be called humorous instances of lion images and metaphors in the ancient Near Eastern record.⁶⁰⁴ These would include portrayals of the lion as part of the animal band on the famous harp box from Ur (**fig. 4.316**) or on an orthostat from Tell Halaf (**fig. 4.317**); as a game player on an Egyptian papyrus from the

⁶⁰³ Note, e.g., the importance of the lion in Greek art. The following works are representative: Denyse Bérend, "La part du lion," in *Le bestiaire des monnaies des sceaux et des médailles* (ed. P. Dehay et al.; Paris: Impr. nat., 1974), 25-34; Jane Burr Carter, *Greek Ivory-Carving in the Orientalizing and Archaic Periods* (New York: Garland, 1985), especially 62-91, 216-25; José Dörig, "Frühe Löwen," *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts—Athenische Abteilung* 76 (1961): 67-80; Bruno Helly, "Des lions dans l'Olympe!" *REA* 70 (1968): 271-85; Ursula Knigge, "Zum Löwen von Kantzas," *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts—Athenische Abteilung* 91 (1976): 167-73 and Pls. 58-62; W. R. Lethaby, "Greek Lion Monuments," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 38 (1918): 37-44; Glenn E. Markoe, "The 'Lion Attack' in Archaic Greek Sculpture: Triumph and Death," *AJA* 90 (1986): 186-87; idem, "The 'Lion Attack' in Archaic Greek Art: Heroic Triumph," *Classical Antiquity* 8 (1989): 86-115 and Pls. I-XXVII; Eleanor Ferguson Rambo, "Lions in Greek Art" (Ph.D. diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1918); Nancy Ann Rhyne, "The Aegean Animal Style: A Study of the Lion, Griffin, and Sphinx" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1970); Carl Weickert, "Zu ionischen Löwen," *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts—Athenische Abteilung* 71 (1956): 145-48 and Pls. 78-79; Marguerite Yon, "À propos de l'Héraklès de Chypre," in *Iconographie classique et identités régionales: Paris, 26 et 27 mai 1983* (ed. L. Kahil, C. Augé, et al.; Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1986), 287-97; and idem, "Les lions archaïques," in *Anthologie salaminienne: Études de G. Argoud* (Salamine de Chypre 4; Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1973), 19-47 and Pls. 5-12.

⁶⁰⁴ Cf. Root, "Animals in the Art of Ancient Iran," 183: "animal imagery had an important social function as a parodic outlet."

New Kingdom (**fig. 4.318**); or as a humorous character in various ancient Near Eastern folk tales.⁶⁰⁵ Not all ancient Near Eastern lion images and metaphors, therefore, are so threatening and violent as those which have been outlined here. Still, there can be little doubt that it is the more typical and “serious” presentation of the lion that lends delight to using this animal in contexts of levity.⁶⁰⁶ Nor can there be any doubt that it is the violent and threatening tenor that is by far the most frequently encountered in the lion image.

Mention might also be made of instances where the reason behind the use of a lion image or metaphor is less clear but seems to shed some insight on the behavior of actual ancient Near Eastern lions. Gilgamesh, for instance, is said to react to the death of Enkidu “like a lioness who is deprived of her young, he traces circles, forward and back.”⁶⁰⁷ Note also the Egyptian depictions of lions mating (see **fig. 4.104**). Again, however, by far the most frequent use of the lion is in images of power and threat, whether that power and threat is depicted as dominating someone/something or as being dominated by a superior power, most notably the monarch/mighty one or deity. Yet, despite their contrariwise nature, *both* aspects are tied to the tenor of power and threat—though one must always be careful not to reduce overmuch the full range of significance. Even so, attention to the prevailing tenor of power and threat nuances Cornelius’s judgment that

The lion’s power was *ambiguous*, expressed in both a positive and negative way, representing the powers of chaos and destruction, but also the powers of royalty, fertility and protection.⁶⁰⁸

Cornelius’ statement is right on many points: the lion motif does symbolize the animal’s power—though it was not always absolute given its defeat—and that power was used in positive and negative ways. But that power is not really

⁶⁰⁵ Note, e.g., the dog that boasts how at his roar the leopard, tiger, lion, and wild cat flee ([*a-n*]a *ri-ma-ti-la ig-ru-ru nim-ru mi-di-nu la-a-bu-ú šu-ra-a-nu*; *BWL*, 192-193 line 23) in the Babylonia fable of the fox (Old Babylonia or Kassite; *ibid.*, 189). Cf. also the mention of the “heart of a lion” (*lib-ba šá la-bi-im-ma*) in *BWL*, 180-181 line 24 (fable of some sort about the ox and the horse). Another text says the fox was seeking the “way of the lion” (*su-ul-le-e né-ší*; *BWL*, 216-217 line 21). Note also Ahiqar 110 (Saying 28): “The lion [𐤁𐤏𐤍] approached to gre[et the ass]: ‘Peace be unto you!’ The ass replied to the lion...” (Lindenberger, *Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 96-97; *idem* in *OTP* 2:501). See Bendt Alster, “An Akkadian Animal Proverb and the Assyrian Letter ABL 555,” *JCS* 41 (1989): 187-93 for another Akkadian example. For Egypt, note “The Lion in Search of Man” (*AEI*, 3:156-59), a fable contained within the Demotic story *The Myth of the Eye of the Sun*. The latter portion of the lion fable became famous in a shorter version in Aesop’s fables (see *AEI*, 3:157).

⁶⁰⁶ The same phenomenon is found in stories still popular today. “The Lion and the Mouse” or the figure of “The Cowardly Lion” come to mind.

⁶⁰⁷ *GIM neš-ti šá ina šu-ta-a-te mu-ra-[an-šá] it-ta-na-as-jur a-na pa-ni-šū u EGIR-šū* (Gilg VIII.60-61; Parpola, *Standard Babylonian Epic*, 100). Cf. also *CAD* N/2, 192-193; *AHW* 2:783.

⁶⁰⁸ Cornelius, “The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East,” 65 (emphasis mine).

ambiguous so much as *ambivalent*, or better, *polyvalent*—open to multiple uses. It remains *power* but is differently experienced depending on perspective, user, and the one who encounters it. That is, the lion image and the power it represents are not in themselves ambiguous; they remain threatening and dominating—forces to be reckoned with—but they are differently focused, perhaps even ambivalently used. It is, in fact, exactly the power and threat inherent in leonine image and metaphor that makes possible visions of the “peaceable kingdom,” familiar from the Hebrew Bible, but also attested in the ancient Near East—for instance, in the Sumerian epic “Enmerkar and the Lord of Arrata.”⁶⁰⁹ Still further, the evidence presented here on the power and threat of the lion reveals that an attempt to reduce the significance of leonine imagery and metaphor to one particular referent—for example, the numinous power of the thunder-storm⁶¹⁰—is unfruitful. There can be no doubt that the lion could and did represent such phenomena and the deities associated with them, but the lion was also associated with much more. It is thus both simpler and more comprehensive to posit that instances of the lion—even the humorous and the eschatological—are primarily dependent on the ancients’ knowledge and fear of *actual* lions (including, especially, their predatory prowess); certainly not only on how the ancients thought such lions did or did not correlate with extra-leonine entities, though these, too, are important.

Given the scope of the ancient Near Eastern evidence pertaining to the lion, it is obvious that more could be said on each of the above points. Even so, every attempt has been made here to provide examples from the most important instances of lion imagery in ancient Near Eastern art and literature. Further study is the work of another day, but the correlation of this material with that culled from the Hebrew Bible and the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine is the work of the next chapter.

⁶⁰⁹ In the latter epic, a golden future is described as a day when “there is no snake, no scorpion, no hyena, no lion, no (wild) dog, no wolf, no anxiety, no fear, (and) men will have no (more) enemies” (*NERT*, 86).

⁶¹⁰ E.g., Brown, “Symbolic Lions,” 17-18.

PART III

The Israelite Lion in Context(s)

Chapter 5

“What a Lioness...Was Your Mother!” (Ezek 19:2): The Israelite Lion in its Ancient Near Eastern Context(s)

“The considerable variety in representations of lions...at once suggests the danger of too simple an explanation. This seems in general to have been the fault of scholars hitherto, who have for the most part been content to recall that ‘the lion of the tribe of Judah’ was from ancient times a symbol of Jewish royalty and hope, and to think that therein the lions were explained fully....So one lion may be ‘accounted for,’ that is, dismissed, but hardly the phenomenon of the lions in general.”¹

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Parts I and II of this work have verified the statement of Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, cited earlier: “Anyone who wants to reconstruct the religious symbol system of Canaan and Israel accurately, and is not content with mere supposition, cannot avoid pictures.”² The pictorial (and textual) data from the ancient Near East have, in fact, proven highly illustrative and informative. But exactly *how* illustrative and informative are they for an understanding of *biblical* leonine imagery and metaphor? That is, while the ancient Near Eastern data certainly help one grasp the use and understanding of the lion image in various cultural contexts, it remains to be seen how they affect, if at all, the “Israelite lion.”³

Two preliminary points must be stressed. First, all of the artifactual and artistic data in Chapter 3, and much of the data in Chapter 4, stem from places within or in close proximity to ancient Israel/Palestine. It is thus not implausible that motifs and conceptions similar to those encapsulated in ancient Near Eastern art were known within Israel as well. Indeed, the iconographical similarities that are obvious in many of the objects discussed in Chapters 3–4 make such a relationship much more than plausible; they make it

¹ Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (13 vols.; New York: Pantheon, 1953–1968), 7:37.

² Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 394–95. Cf. also *ibid.*, xi.

³ I mean by this term the way the lion is used in the Hebrew Bible and in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine. For the latter, the important caveats entered in Chapter 3 (§§3.1 and 3.8) must be recalled; these indicate that the “Israelite lion” may not, in fact, be truly Israelite in every period, locale, or find spot. But see further below.

quite likely and, in some cases, certain.⁴ Second, the very same situation may obtain for at least some of the texts presented in Chapters 2 and 4.⁵

The question, therefore, is not whether the comparative data are *informative* and illustrative—they are certainly that—but whether they are *formative* for an understanding of the materials in the Hebrew Bible. The present chapter answers this question positively by focusing on the use of the lion with monarch/mighty one, deity, and enemy.⁶ When the leonine imagery and metaphor of the Hebrew Bible is placed in its various archaeological and ancient Near Eastern contexts, it becomes clear that the comparative evidence is far more than an interesting visual aid (at worst), or (at best) important only for the narrow area or period in which it is found in the history of the ancient Near East. Rather, this *rapprochement* corroborates the view that the lion imagery of the Hebrew Bible owes much, both explicitly and implicitly, to the long and rich tradition of the lion throughout the ancient Near East.

Various parts of this work have already demonstrated this to be the case, especially in the interconnections between artistic depictions in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine (Chapter 3) and those of the broader ancient Near East (Chapter 4). The task of the present chapter, then, is more programmatic: to explicate how such interconnections, interactions, and interrelated-ness—artistic and otherwise (i.e., textual)⁷—cast light on the texts

⁴ So, e.g., the Assyrian royal seal impression found in Samaria (fig. 3.93).

⁵ See, e.g., Karel van der Toorn's argument on the relationship of Daniel 6 to Babylonian literary motifs ("In the Lion's Den: The Babylonian Background of a Biblical Motif," *CBQ* 60 [1998]: 626–40) and further below.

⁶ I leave aside here the use of the lion as an image for the self/righteous (see §2.3.1). This is also found in the comparative material, but with less significant interpretive results beyond the facts that the usage is: a) also attested in the comparative evidence; and b) similar in presentation and function to the Hebrew Bible. Even so, it is perhaps worth noting in the light of Claus Westermann's (see his *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1981], 267–69) understanding of the three-dimensional nature of the enemy (self, enemy, God) in the lament psalms, that the lion is used as a metaphor in the Psalter for each of the three dimensions.

⁷ Another example might be linguistic borrowing. See, e.g., Appendix 1 for Kaplan's, Glück's, and Lipiński's opinions regarding possible etymological connection(s) between Hebrew and Egyptian lion terms. Such connections (if they exist) could be by-products of common Afro-Asiatic (Hamito-Semitic) language materials. Artistic dependence is somewhat different, and here one could posit not only the carrying of a style or motif from one locale to another by (mobile) artisans, but also by mobile (i.e., minor) art—especially imports. See especially Christoph Uehlinger, ed., *Images as Media: Sources for the Cultural History of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (1st Millennium BCE)* (OBO 175; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg, 2000). The exact means by which Israelite culture came into contact with other cultures must be decided on a case-by-case basis. Peter Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 730 n. 64, for example, thinks that Assyrian visual arts were not a major source for the Assyrian motifs in First Isaiah. Instead, the importance of the visual arts may have lain "more in the *general* impression" they created of Assyrian power. Though Machinist admits that the royal stelae and rock reliefs set up in various parts of the realm (e.g.,

from the Hebrew Bible proper, especially when considered in conjunction with the images recovered from the archaeology of ancient Israel/Palestine.

5.2 “THE LION, MIGHTY AMONG ANIMALS, WHICH DOES NOT TURN BACK FROM ANYTHING”: THE LION AS TROPE OF THREAT AND POWER

Before turning to the three main metaphorical referents of lion imagery in the Hebrew Bible—the monarch/mighty one, the deity, and the enemy—mention should be made of the naturalistic use of the lion. In the main, the instances of such in the comparative materials, both visual and textual, and in the Hebrew Bible and archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine are quite similar. Note the sentiment shared by Amos 3:12 and Erra V.11, though the two cast the notion in different literary forms:

Thus says Yahweh: Just as the shepherd rescues two legs or a piece of an ear from the mouth of the lion... (Amos 3:12)

One cannot snatch a carcass from the mouth of a roaring lion.⁸ (Erra V.11)

Erra states formulaically, even proverbially, what Amos states in the course of prophetic speech: the formidability of the lion has serious repercussions for both its prey and the one who would seek to rescue that prey from its maw.

Consider, too, the similarities between Exod 22:12 and the Code of Hammurapi, Law 244:

If it [the animal] was utterly ripped apart [אֶם-טָרַף יָטַרְף], he shall bring it as evidence. In the case of the mangled carcass [הִטְרַפָּה], he will not make restitution. (Exod 22:12)

If a man rents an ox or a donkey and a lion [*nešum*] kills it in the open country, it is the owner's loss.⁹ (CH, #244)

The semantic domain of leonine imagery in the Hebrew Bible, especially the use of טָרַף in Exod 22:12 (see Appendix 2), is what leads one to suspect that the lion is in mind in the first passage. Law 244 of the Code of Hammurapi not only presents a close legal parallel to Exod 22:12 with regard to the payment of damages, it also supports the leonine suspicion for the Exodus text by its explicit indication that it is, in fact, often a lion that causes such damages in the first place.

Samaria and Ashdod) may have served to mediate Assyrian royal propaganda, he ends up arguing heavily for *literary* mediation of that propaganda, especially with recourse to the Tell Fekheriyeh inscription. However, his argument about royal stelae (often iconic) and rock reliefs actually mitigates his earlier conclusion that the art was only tangential.

⁸ Luigi Cagni, *L'epopea di Erra* (Studi Seemitici 34; Rome: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, 1969), 122; cf. also CAD L, 24; and, further, Chapter 4 (§4.2.1).

⁹ Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (2d ed.; SBLWAW 6; Atlanta: Scholars, 1997), 127; cf. also CAD N/2, 193.

Or compare the use of the lion as a punitive device¹⁰ in various treaty documents—for example, the treaty between Esarhaddon and Baal of Tyre, which includes the curse “[May] Bethel and Anath-Bethel [deliv]er you to a man-eating lion”;¹¹ or the treaty of *KTK* and Arpad (Sefire), which, though broken, probably had a similar curse.¹² Both of these texts, along with others similar to them (see, e.g., §4.2.2), are strongly reminiscent of the use of the lion as a means of punishment in biblical texts like 2 Kings 17:25–26:

And when they first began to live there, they did not fear Yahweh. So Yahweh sent the lions [הַאֲרִיִּים] on them, and they were killers among them. So they spoke to the Assyrian king, saying: The people whom you exiled and settled in the cities of Samaria do not know the judgment(s) of the god of the land and he has sent the lions [הַאֲרִיִּים] on them, and they are killing them because there are none among them who know the judgment(s) of the god of the land¹³

and, perhaps, Isa 15:9:

For the waters of <Dibon> are full of blood. For I will put on <Dibon> more—a lion [אֲרִיָּה] for the one who escapes Moab, and for the remnant, <terror>.¹⁴

The use of the lion in punitive contexts such as these, whether covenantal or not, makes sense given the widely known (and feared) predatory dominance of the lion in antiquity. Simply put, the lion was the dominant carnivore in the fauna of the ancient Near East (see §2.2.1) and that fact makes it ideally suited for contexts where a naturalistic punishment is required or expected.

Again, it is tempting to speculate here, as earlier in this work, that this literary usage arises from actual encounters with real lions in the wild, even if those original encounters lay in the far distant past. The fool of Proverbs (22:13; 26:13), who fears encountering lions (אֲרִי and שֹׁחַל) in the streets, that is, may not be so foolish after all, especially as other texts—biblical and otherwise—tell similar stories (e.g., 1 Kings 13)! The degree of naturalistic information that one can glean from other textual references to lions in the Hebrew Bible and from the comparative materials lends still further support, but the situation is unequivocal when it comes to the artistic materials. Here,

¹⁰ It will be remembered that this is a major focus of Kaplan’s work (see Michael Matthew Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible: A Study of a Biblical Metaphor” [Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981], 115–79).

¹¹ *CAD* N/2, 194, citing Baal rev. iv.6–7.

¹² Sefire II A lines 9–10a: “[and may] the mouth of a lion [eat] and the mouth of [a...] and the mouth of a leopard [...]” (cf. Sefire I A lines 30b–31). See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (rev. ed.; BibOr 19/A; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995), 122; cf. 44–45, 127.

¹³ Is the definite article on “the lions” significant? Whatever the case, note the causal connection (expressed in 2 Kgs 17:26 by כַּאֲשֶׁר) between the lack of the knowledge of the judgment(s) of God and the sending of those lions.

¹⁴ See Appendix 3 for the emendations. The emendations adopted here do not affect the instance of lion imagery, though some scholars have, in fact, chosen to emend אֲרִיָּה (see Appendix 3).

too, the data from ancient Israel/Palestine and the ancient Near East bear marked similarities. Some of those similarities could be identified as the result of artistic influence (see above and §3.8), but, quite apart from those considerations, the artistic data weigh in heavily that the lion is a threatening figure and the various databases agree on the predatory aspects of their leonine subjects. The lion is frequently presented in naturalistic contexts, pursuing, attacking, or devouring prey (cf., e.g., **figs. 3.56, 3.58, 3.94, 3.103–104, 3.135–138, 3.142, 3.151–152, 3.155–156** with **figs. 4.2–6, 4.9–16, 4.24, 4.26, 4.30, 4.32, 4.34–40, 4.43, 4.45–46, 4.304, 4.310**, etc.) and this prey can include human beings (cf., e.g., **figs. 3.12, 3.59–63, 3.67–68, 3.71, 3.74, 3.98, 3.102** with **figs. 4.56–58, 4.60–63, 4.84, 4.103, 4.169–172, 4.311**, etc.; see also §4.2.2). All of this is quite frightening and awe-inspiring, testifying to the efficacy of the lion's usefulness as a trope of threat and power.¹⁵ To be sure, there can be little doubt that at least some of these representations carry *supra*-naturalistic meaning—that is, that they are symbolic in some way.¹⁶ Furthermore, there can be no doubt whatsoever that such presentations—symbolic or not when they appear singly—appear frequently in contexts that are almost certainly symbolic of other, non-leonine realities. This is probably nowhere truer than in the case of the lion-hunt where texts and images portray the dominant human figure fighting with live lions or pictured triumphant over dead ones.¹⁷

Yet this last comment warrants an important caveat: despite similarities between the Hebrew Bible and the comparative and archaeological evidence on the predatory dominance of the lion, they are also agreed that the lion *can be killed*. Even such a great animal as the lion is ultimately mortal and this is captured in the pithy statement of Eccl 9:4: “a living dog is better than a dead lion.” This proverbial statement is fleshed out in extensive and significant ways by the various testimonies of numerous royal figures in the ancient Near East who claimed to have (and are depicted as having) hunted and killed lions. Yet the king-killing-lion motif is exactly what seems to be *lacking* in the Hebrew Bible.

¹⁵ It will be recalled that exceptions to this judgment are just that, exceptional in some way. One could recall the rather tame representations of the lion on some seals from Wadi Daliyeh (**figs. 3.139–140**, cf. also **fig. 3.141**, probably from Wadi Daliyeh), which are late and perhaps Greek-influenced, or the odd (and rare) images of a bull triumphing over a lion (**figs. 3.54–55, 4.49–51**; cf. also **figs. 3.52–53**), which are probably symbolic in some way (see the discussion at these images).

¹⁶ See the previous note for a very probable example: the bull-besting-lion motif.

¹⁷ The texts and images are too numerous to repeat here. For the ancient Near Eastern data, see especially §4.3.1.2 and the materials presented there. For the Hebrew Bible and archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine, see §5.3.1 below.

5.3. “SAUL AND JONATHAN...STRONGER THAN LIONS”: THE MONARCH/MIGHTY ONE AND THE LION

5.3.1. *The Lack of a Lion-King*

The long and venerable ancient Near Eastern tradition that associates the monarch with the lion (§4.3, especially §§4.3.1–4.3.2) confirms what was preliminarily concluded in Chapter 2 (§2.3.3)—namely, that this motif is noticeably rare in the Hebrew Bible. To be more precise, *there are no texts whatsoever* in the Hebrew Bible that employ leonine imagery or metaphor for the monarch in a violent, militaristic fashion that is *simultaneously* portrayed in a positive light. This is in marked contrast with the ancient Near Eastern material, which frequently makes use of such imagery and does so rather consistently (see §4.3.2). Nor is there in the biblical texts a presentation of the monarch as the great protector against and fighter of the lion and all that it represents—again, in marked contrast to the ancient Near East (see §4.3.1). Still further, the appropriation found in the ancient Near East where the monarch *became* the lion is also lacking in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁸ In short, the lack of a lion-king, while perhaps easily missed when reading the Hebrew Bible in isolation, is a glaring omission when seen in the light of the ancient Near Eastern data. Of course, one might protest here: there are a few texts in the Hebrew Bible that do, in fact, seem to present monarchs in a leonine fashion. 1 Samuel 17 and 2 Samuel 1 are among those that come immediately to mind. Both warrant further comment.

2 Samuel 1:23 is one of the clearest attributions of lion imagery to a monarch in the Hebrew Bible. In this passage, Saul and Jonathan are said to be “mightier than lions” (מַאֲרִיִּת נָבָרִי). Even so, several factors argue against an easy correlation of this text with Egyptian or Assyrian royal inscriptions likening their respective monarchs to raging lions. First, the referent is dual: *both* Saul and Jonathan are likened to lions; the metaphor thus does not refer exclusively to the reigning monarch. Closely related to this point is a second: Jonathan never ascended the throne; again, the referent cannot be exclusively royal, or at least it does not refer exclusively to the ruling king. Third, the context of this text is David’s lament after the death of Saul and Jonathan. This account, therefore, is not one in which the monarch (along with son) is described as victorious in battle. On the contrary, these lions—despite their strength!—have been de-clawed, as it were, their bodies hung on the walls of Beth-shan (1 Sam 31:10). The use of a lion image here, then, is somewhat ironic, contrary to its typical use in contexts where the power, might, and success of the monarch are celebrated. But, in 2 Samuel 1, “the mighty have

¹⁸ Again, see §4.3.2. In the ancient Near East, this trend was especially frequent in New Kingdom Egypt (especially among the Ramessides of Dynasties 19–20; see §4.3.2.1) and in the Neo-Assyrian empire from the time of Adad-narari II through Ashurnasirpal II, Sargon II, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon (see §4.3.2.2).

fallen, and the weapons of war have perished” (2 Sam 1:27). Finally, one notes the close conjunction of the lion image here with another animal comparison: Saul and Jonathan were also “swifter than eagles” (מְנַשְּׂרִים קָלִיד). While Near Eastern royal inscriptions also employ lion imagery in combination with and in close proximity to other animal imagery (see §5.4.3 below), the lament context in 2 Samuel 1 is again of signal importance. These eagles, despite their speed, have been caught, their wings clipped. In short, the lion image here is markedly different than that encountered in the royal inscriptions surveyed in Chapter 4 (§4.3.2).

The same judgment holds true for 1 Samuel 17, though this text deserves a fuller treatment as there are some strong similarities between the biblical account and Neo-Assyrian royal iconography. In this chapter, David recounts stories of his shepherding duties in order to convince Saul to allow him to fight Goliath.

David said to Saul: “Your servant was his father’s shepherd. And when the lion [הָאֵרִי] or the bear came and took a sheep from the flock, then I would go after it and I would strike it and I would save (the sheep) from its mouth. And if it rose up against me, I would seize it by its beard and I would strike it and kill it. Your servant has killed both the lion [הָאֵרִי] and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the ranks of the living God.” And David said: “Yahweh, who delivered me from the paw of the lion [הָאֵרִי] and from the paw of the bear—it is he who will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” Then Saul said to David: “Go! And may Yahweh be with you.” (1 Sam 17:34–37)

The comparative data presented in Chapter 4 shed considerable light on this text for it seems that we have here an Israelite monarch, or soon-to-be-monarch,¹⁹ participating in the venerable ancient Near Eastern tradition of royal lion-killing. The specific details of exactly how David killed the lion lend further, and specific, support to such a connection: he would “seize it by its beard,” “strike it,” “and kill it.” All of this, and especially the *seizing by the beard* (וְהַחֲזִיקִי בִזְקָנִי), immediately recalls the Neo-Assyrian royal seal impressions (see **fig. 4.109**; cf. also **fig. 4.122**) and, especially, Ashurbanipal’s hunt reliefs (see **fig. 4.130**), where the pose is *identical*. The fact that an example of the royal seal-type was found in Samaria in an Iron Age II context (**fig. 3.93**) indicates that this image was known and available in ancient Israel/Palestine. When one puts these data together with the story in 1 Samuel 17, it is tempting to conclude that the narrative is alluding to Neo-Assyrian royal propaganda.²⁰ If so, David’s lion-killing would be a narrative clue—

¹⁹ Though note the anointing of David already in 1 Sam 16:1–13.

²⁰ To my knowledge, Michael T. Davis is the first to have drawn this connection in his work on the Goliath narrative. I want to credit Davis for that connection, for first bringing it to my attention, and for discussing it with me, though I have taken it in slightly different ways than he does in his own work, to which the reader is referred. See Michael T. Davis, “The Iconography of Royal Propaganda in the Visual Arts of the Ancient Near East as Background to the Literary Rhetoric and Motif in 1 Samuel 17” (paper presented at the international meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Leuven, Belgium, August

perhaps a quite conspicuous one—that David is destined for kingship. Saul should beware!

To make the point more forcefully, the allusion need not be dependent on Neo-Assyrian iconography nor on the Neo-Assyrian royal seal impression specifically.²¹ The tradition of the king as lion-killer is, after all, much older than the Neo-Assyrian Empire and, further, it has a long life after that empire is gone. So, quite apart from the specific connections to the Neo-Assyrian period, one can argue that the detail of David's dispatching of a troublesome lion is far from innocent, but instead draws on ancient royal traditions well-known and attested in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Persia, and elsewhere. Again, the texts and images supporting this tradition are extensive and pervasive (see especially §4.3.1.2). Even so, a particularly fascinating text to consider is the Pennsylvania tablet of Gilgamesh (Gilgamesh P).²² In this version, Enkidu, after his introduction to culture, leaves the wild, described here as "the shepherds' domain,"²³ and goes to Uruk where he eats bread, drinks beer, and takes up "his weapon to do battle with lions."²⁴ Apparently, Enkidu became some sort of night watchman for his fellow shepherds because

[w]hen at night, asleep, the shepherds lay down,
 he struck down wolves, he chased off lions.
 Sleeping lay the senior herdsman,
 their watchman Enkidu, a [man wide] awake.²⁵

Unfortunately, the tablet is broken, but the thrust of the rest of the story is that Enkidu is selected (or takes it upon himself) to challenge Gilgamesh and the two wrestle. It is only after Gilgamesh beats (?) Enkidu in one-on-one combat that Enkidu acknowledges Gilgamesh's unique and god-ordained destiny to be king. The dynamic here is not unlike 1 Samuel 17: the lion-killer is a very real threat to the monarch, and is a viable rival who might make a claim to the

1995); idem, "The Getting of Kingship: A Comparative Analysis of Rhetoric and Motif in 1 Samuel 17" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Anaheim, California, November 1989); and idem, "The Composition History of 1 Samuel 17: A Literary-Textual Approach" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association, Chicago, Illinois, July 1987). For the posture of grasping the beard, striking, and killing, see also 2 Sam 20:9–10a where Joab is said to have killed Amasa with much the same stance and vocabulary.

²¹ Note that the royal seal impression frequently shows the king grasping the lion by the top of its head, not by its beard proper (see **fig. 4.109**, cf. **fig. 4.122**; so also the Samaria seal, **fig. 3.93**; but contrast **fig. 4.130**). Katharine Doob Sakenfeld has suggested to me (personal communication) that perhaps 𐎧𐎺 in 1 Samuel 17 refers to the lion's mane, not just the tuft around the chin.

²² Probably 18th century. See Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: A New Translation* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1999), 101. Gilgamesh P parallels Tablet II of the Standard Version.

²³ George, *Epic of Gilgamesh*, 104; his italics to indicate uncertain portions.

²⁴ Ibid., 105.

²⁵ Ibid.

throne. The difference is that Gilgamesh retains his kingship, which the lion-killing Enkidu acknowledges, while the lion-killing David usurps Saul's throne. Perhaps this is because Gilgamesh is also a lion-killer—a kingly performance—while no comparable story is preserved of Saul.²⁶

Again, the Gilgamesh P text is but one example from many that could be lifted up to reiterate the point that lion-killing is a royal pursuit. Given the extent of this tradition, one must seriously reckon with it as possible background when considering the seemingly innocuous comment of David.²⁷ In short, it may well be the case that “[t]he story of David...who ‘slew both the lion and the bear,’ foreshadows his future greatness.”²⁸ And, it might be added, it foreshadows that future greatness in very specific ways.²⁹

Still, the foreshadowing remains mostly implicit. That is, while the similarities between 1 Samuel 17 and the ancient Near Eastern materials are significant, they should not be so overstressed that the important differences that are also apparent are neglected. Perhaps the most obvious of these differences are that David claims to have killed *both* lion *and* bear,³⁰ and that

²⁶ James K. Mead has reminded me that, if anything, the contrast between David and Saul on this point is rather marked. Prior to kingship, David is engaged in kingly activities (shepherding, lion-killing); Saul, on the other hand, wanders around trying to locate his father's lost asses (1 Sam 9:3–4)! For other contrasts between David, especially as presented in 1 Samuel 17–18, and Saul, see A. Graeme Auld and Craig Y. S. Ho, “The Making of David and Goliath,” *JSOT* 56 (1992): 19–39.

²⁷ The long ancient Near Eastern tradition of associating the monarch with the role of shepherd could also be drawn into this discussion.

²⁸ J. K. Anderson, “Hunting,” in *OEANE* 3:122. On a literary level, note that Saul gave Michal—his daughter, David's wife—to Palti, the son of Laish (1 Sam 25:44), but that later in the narrative (2 Sam 3:15), David recovers her from the same person (here called Paltiel, the son of Laish). Here again David is triumphant, this time over the son of the “Lion” (לִיָּא; see further Appendix 1).

²⁹ I.e., royal ways but also, given the connections between war and hunting (see, e.g., **figs. 4.113–114** with discussion; more generally, §4.3.1.2), the lion-killing might also prefigure military prowess—one of David's unique strengths. The text explicitly parallels David's victory over the lion with David's victory over Goliath (1 Sam 17:36), though he concludes by giving credit to Yahweh (17:37; see §5.4 below).

³⁰ Syntactically, all of the forms are singular, though this could be an instance of a compound subject with singular verb, which is often found in Hebrew prose (see, e.g., Christo H. J. Van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 249–51, especially 250). Still, one wonders about the predation of wild bears on domesticated sheep in the ancient Near East and, furthermore, what anatomical structure bears have that is analogous to and could be designated by the term “beard” (or mane), זָקָן. Such considerations might be used to argue that “bear” is a later addition. Of course, the opposite could be argued if it could be established that the lion was not widespread in ancient Israel/Palestine (unlikely given the discussion in §2.2.1.1). Whatever the case, there is no firm evidence from the Versions to support either redactional argument. Note, in fact, Amos 5:19, which contains the same sequence “the lion” (הַאֲרִי) > “the bear” (הַדָּב), which may render the question moot. Anthony R. Ceresko, “A Rhetorical Analysis of David's ‘Boast’ (1 Samuel 17:34–37): Some Reflections on Method,” *CBQ*

this (these?) escapade(s) are set within the framework of his *normal* shepherding activities: protection of his flocks.³¹ Moreover, this activity is said to have taken place *prior* to David's accession to the kingship, though the present form of 1 Samuel recounts David's anointing already in 1 Samuel 16 before this discussion with Saul. These considerations do not obviate the possible symbolic meanings and connections of David's lion-killing, but they do warrant caution in any attempt that correlates that killing too easily with the Near Eastern tradition.³²

Compositional issues are of import and interest in this discussion. 1 Samuel 17 is traditionally associated with the complex known as the "History of David's Rise" (1 Sam 16:14–2 Sam 5:12)³³ and occurs quite early in that complex, perhaps as the first encounter between Saul and David, though the text is confused on this point (cf. 1 Sam 16:14–23). With regard to possible Neo-Assyrian influence, the question is obviously one of chronology. Can the

47 (1985): 59, 63–64 and n. 17—referring to the much earlier work of Felix Perles (*Analekten zur Textkritik des Alten Testaments* [Munich: Theodor Ackermann, 1895], 27)—has posited that the MT should be emended to read "a lion came *or* a bear attacked" (ואתה הדרוב, *wsšlātā haddób* ; MT: ואת־הדרוב). While this is attractive, especially if one posits a "shared consonant" (so Ceresko) or simple haplography, others posit that the *nota accusativi* is simply misplaced (e.g., P. Kyle McCarter, *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* [AB 8; Garden City: Doubleday, 1980], 287). Whatever the case, the singular verb form can be accounted for by the syntactical phenomenon described above. The other singular forms remain slightly more difficult, though they may reflect a type of distributive use.

³¹ When David's boast to have delivered (והצלתִי) the lamb from the mouth of the lion (and bear) (1 Sam 17:35) is set in conversation with Amos 3:12, Exod 22:9–12, and other texts, one might well question the veracity of his claim—it is exceedingly unlikely that a lamb would survive, especially after having been in the mouth of the lion (so also Norbert Lohfink, "Ps 7,2–6—vom Löwen gejagt," in *Die Freude an Gott—unsere Kraft: Festschrift für Otto Bernhard Knoch zum 65. Geburtstag* [ed. Johannes Joachim Degenhardt; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991], 63). This may well indicate that the account in 1 Sam 17:34–37 has more to do with royal ideology and propaganda than anything else; if so, that could be taken as further evidence of a possible connection between the biblical text at this point and other ancient Near Eastern examples of the motif (Neo-Assyrian or otherwise). At the very least, the tight structure of the unit (see Ceresko, "A Rhetorical Analysis," 61–63) is testimony to its high literary artistry. Cf. further Simon J. De Vries, "David's Victory over the Philistine as Saga and as Legend," *JBL* 92 (1973): 23–36, especially 31–35, for the genre and nature of the unit wherein the boast appears; he calls it "contest-legend" (35). On the eloquence of David's speech, see Ceresko, "A Rhetorical Analysis," 58–74; and also Claus Schedl, "Davids rhetorischer Spruch an Saul: 1 Sam 17,34–36," *BN* 32 (1985): 38–40.

³² In light of Gilgamesh P, for instance, David looks quite a bit like Enkidu, who also kills lions and other animals (there, wolves) in the course of normal shepherding duties. In this light, the significance may lie mostly in the differences between Gilgamesh and Saul and their exploits *vis-à-vis* lions (see above).

³³ See, conveniently, Richard D. Nelson, *The Historical Books* (Interpreting Biblical Texts; Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 111.

1 Samuel 17 account(s)³⁴ be dated to a comparable horizon? Given the compositional complexities, a definitive answer is not forthcoming. Most scholars have followed Martin Noth, who assigned 1 Samuel 17 to pre-Deuteronomistic materials, and the same holds true for the History of David's Rise.³⁵ A notable exception to this trend is found in the work of John Van Seters, who would attribute the whole history of the early monarchy, including the History of David's Rise, to the Deuteronomist proper.³⁶

Depending on the precise date of the pre-Deuteronomistic materials in DtrH, and given the wide use of the royal seal impression,³⁷ it is possible that either compositional option might work in an argument that would find Neo-Assyrian influence on the description of David's shepherding activities.³⁸ Even so, it is probably the case that the later dating of the literary complex would work best in such an approach. That being said, it must be noted that Van Seters' arguments regarding the composition of the Deuteronomistic History, while significant, have failed to gain widespread acceptance. Moreover, given the long life of the ancient Near Eastern traditions of the lion-hunting and lion-killing monarch, it is unnecessary to argue the point with great chronological precision. When seen in the broader Near Eastern context, David's lion-killing reads as a narrative clue or foreshadowing of his coming glory—not to mention

³⁴ The source-critical issues in 1 Samuel 17 are complex. For extensive treatments, see Dominique Barthélemy et al., *The Story of David and Goliath: Textual and Literary Criticism* (OBO 73; Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1986); McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 284–309; Auld and Ho, “The Making of David and Goliath,” 19–39; De Vries, “David's Victory over the Philistine,” 23–36; Walter Dietrich, “Die Erzählungen von David und Goliath in I Sam 17,” *ZAW* 108 (1996): 172–91; Julio Trebolle, “The Story of David and Goliath (1 Sam 17–18): Textual Variants and Literary Composition,” *BIOSCS* 23 (1990): 16–30; and Arie van der Kooij, “The Story of David and Goliath: The Early History of Its Text,” *ETL* 68 (1992): 118–31. Despite the difficulties, it is instructive to note that the exploits of David with the lion and bear are preserved in both the MT (longer) and LXX (shorter) versions.

³⁵ See Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (2d ed.; JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 86–87. See also Douglas A. Knight, “Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomists,” in *Old Testament Interpretation: Past, Present, and Future: Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker* (ed. James Luther Mays, David L. Petersen, and Kent Harold Richards; Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 67; and Nelson, *The Historical Books*, 111. Cf. also Norman Gottwald's discussion of the pre- or proto-Dtr “Prophetic History” that has been dated “during or shortly after the fall of Israel in 722” (*The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985], 316; cf. 315–17).

³⁶ See John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), especially 264–71.

³⁷ At least three centuries, from Shalmaneser III through Aššur-etel-ilāni. See the discussion in §4.3.1.1.

³⁸ But see note 30 above on the possibility of a later addition or gloss to the text. In such a scenario—if the lion-element, rather than the bear-element, is deemed secondary—it is only necessary that the redactor/glossator belonged to the Neo-Assyrian period.

the fact that he has king flowing in his veins—quite apart from whether or not this foreshadowing is *distinctly* Neo-Assyrian in flavor.³⁹

Whatever is decided with regard to David's lion-killing and the available comparative evidence (Neo-Assyrian or otherwise), it should be emphasized that this account is the *only* clearly positive connection of an Israelite monarch with a lion in a narrative context, and that, even here, the connection is somewhat muted and allusive. The most important ramification that results from this is not the problem(s) it raises for connecting David's lion-killing with other ancient Near Eastern exemplars. As stated above, such a connection is relatively secure, despite its allusive nature. Instead, the most significant item is the lack—beyond David—of comparable references (and referents) in the texts of the Hebrew Bible. This is both fascinating and curious; it requires explanation. That this dearth is real and not just apparent is underscored by several facts: 1) several texts from the wisdom tradition do evidence knowledge of metaphors likening the king to a lion (e.g., Prov 19:12; 20:2; cf. 30:29–31)—that these come from wisdom texts is of no small import as those texts are often considered cosmopolitan in nature; 2) moreover, in certain prophetic passages other, *non-Israelite* kings are portrayed as lions in a manner not unlike ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions (e.g., Pharaoh in Ezek 32:2–3; the kings of Assyria and Babylon in Jer 50:17; Nebuchadnezzar in Jer 51:34); and 3) still further, the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine demonstrates that the image was also available “on the ground,” as it were (see, e.g., **figs. 3.11–13, 3.67–74, 3.81, 3.93, 3.120–124, 3.143–144**; cf. **fig. 3.126**).⁴⁰ The last point is further supported in the biblical text by the traditions regarding the leonine decoration of Solomon's dais and throne (1 Kgs 10:19–20; 2 Chr 9:18–19; cf. **figs. 3.126, 4.162–171**). However, apart from 1 Samuel 17 and 2 Sam 1:23, such a motif is entirely absent from the narrative traditions

³⁹ See note 43 below and cf., e.g., the much later story of Kay Khusrau recounted by Peter Calmeyer, “The Persian King in the Lion's Den,” *Iraq* 45 (1983): 138–39: “he was a king, and he had to do with lions: when the young boy had to hide himself in the family of a shepherd, Firdausi tells us, he brought home lions instead of ordinary game, hereby showing that he was of royal blood” (139).

⁴⁰ Cf. Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira, 1998), 199: “Were the kings of Israel and Judah also engaged in hunting lions? There is no recorded answer to this question, but this is very feasible since they had all the necessary ingredients and the ambition to be considered as great and powerful as the other kings of the ancient Near East.” While attractive, this suggestion must remain uncertain. Moreover, one should note that the availability (or, at least, the representation) of the lion image in ancient Israel/Palestine does not hold true for all parts of the Levant. See, e.g., Ulrich Hübner, “Das ikonographische Repertoire der ammonitischen Siegel und seine Entwicklung,” in *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Fribourg on April 17–20, 1991* (ed. Benjamin Sass and Christoph Uehlinger; OBO 125; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 1993), 149, who notes an apparent lack of the lion motif in Ammonite glyptic iconography.

about the Israelite monarchy.⁴¹ The references that do exist are not found in the contexts of warfare or large battles—and this is true even when mighty persons such as Samson, Benaiah, and Daniel are included (see §5.3.2 below).⁴² The material about David, for instance, as similar as it is to Neo-Assyrian royal hunt scenes, and while found in the context of a battle with the Philistines, reflects, nevertheless, one-on-one naturalistic combat. And, again, though this account may well carry royal ideological overtones, it is somewhat subtle on this point (see above). That is, even if one knows Neo-Assyrian glyptic (or other Near Eastern reflexes of the lion-killing monarch), the story of 1 Samuel 17 is that of a shepherd boy who kills not just the lion but also the bear.⁴³ And

⁴¹ Gen 49:9–10 must be mentioned here, though it is poetry, not narrative proper. These verses use the lion vehicle as a metaphor for Judah and go on to say that “[t]he scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet” (so NRSV). Some have argued that this is: 1) a positive attribution of the lion image with respect to monarchy; and 2) that the image is violent (so Alfred Marx, “‘Jusqu’à ce que vienne Shiloh’: Pour une interprétation messianique de Genèse 49, 8–12,” in *Ce Dieu qui vient: Études sur l’Ancien et le Nouveau Testament offertes au Professeur Bernard Renaud à l’occasion de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire* [ed. Raymond Kuntzmann; Lectio Divina 159; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1995], 103–104). Two considerations indicate that the matter is far from certain, however: 1) the principal subject of the metaphor is a *tribe* (Judah), or at least its eponymous ancestor, not a reigning monarch (cf. the leonine metaphors for Gad and Dan in Deut 33:20, 22); 2) the interpretation of the oracle has been heavily debated and its overall meaning is in some doubt. It has been debated, for example, whether the image is violent in the first place (but note “prey” in v. 9). See also Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (repr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 50, 57 nn. 31–32, who read “judge” (שֹׁפֵט) for the MT’s שֹׁפֵט (cf. LXX: ἄρχων) and “commander” in v. 10. See Chapter 2 (§2.3.1) for further discussion of Gen 49:9. These considerations are not to be understood as saying that Gen 49:9–10 is definitely negative in valence; only that it cannot be used with certainty on this score.

Num 23:24 and 24:9 are not unrelated to this discussion. Marjo Christina Annette Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (UBL 8; Münster: UGARIT-Verlag, 1990), 534–55 has argued that the lion metaphor in these texts originally referred to God, not the people of Israel. But even if they did originally apply to the people, the fact that this (early) poetry (now) applies the metaphor to *the people writ large*, and not a singular leader or monarch (anachronistic in the literary context, to be sure) is quite significant and supports the point above.

⁴² One might add to this discussion the leonine decorations used in the Temple (see 1 Kgs 7:29, 36; Ezek 41:19) and argue for a comparison between the divine king’s house (temple) and the royal house (palace). Yet at this point, too, the imagery is not decidedly martial.

⁴³ Note also that there is no mention of a weapon—a significant contrast with most of David’s fellow lion-killing kings (but cf. Samson in Judg 14:6 with David in 1 Sam 17:50). David is also presumably on foot whereas many kings hunted lions from horseback or in chariots (see **figs. 4.113, 4.116–121, 4.124–125, 4.132, 4.134–135, 4.145–147, 4.149, 4.152–153**). David’s seizing (חָזַק) of the lion, especially without any mention of a weapon, is reminiscent of scenes of heroic encounter and control (cf., e.g., **figs. 3.81, 3.109–110, 3.116, 3.120–125, 3.144; 4.85–86, 4.88, 4.151** along with the discussions in §§3.5 and 4.3.1.1). Though many of these images are Persian in

David does this, according to his speech, because it relates to his vocation: this is what shepherds do when their sheep are victimized. To be sure, the shepherd motif is also one with a long history of royal and dynastic overtones, but the point stands: Even in 1 Samuel 17, the most extended and explicit of indigenous Israelite and positive royal associations with the lion in the Hebrew Bible, the similarity to the comparative material is not as pronounced as might be expected. The other instances are *even less* pronounced. Indeed, the other texts that employ the lion-king metaphor are mostly negative in force.⁴⁴ What might explain this fact, especially in light of the wide availability of positive instances of leonine imagery and metaphor in the comparative materials and in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine?

It is tempting to posit that this situation is reflective of an ideology of kingship preserved in the Hebrew Bible that is at least at some level alternative to the ideology of kingship found among some of Israel's contemporaries in the ancient Near East—most notably Assyria and Egypt. If so, the lack of a lion-king would be further evidence that Israel conceived of and construed its monarch, at least in the biblical texts, in ways that were somewhat distinct from its neighbors,⁴⁵ especially insofar as there is no similar avoidance of the lion image with reference to God (or other, *foreign* kings) in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, if anything, there is an inordinately large amount of leonine imagery associated with Yahweh and this imagery is quite similar to that found with other deities in the ancient Near East (see §§2.3.4, 4.4.3, and, further, §5.4 below). The difference between the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near Eastern context, therefore, seems centered on the monarch. Why?

While one must always tread cautiously in trying to explain what is left unexplained in the sources, it is at least possible that this difference in the use of royal leonine imagery and metaphor in the Hebrew Bible might be due to the fact that a more restricted conception of kingship is presented there than that

provenance, the so-called contest scenes (e.g., **figs. 4.53, 4.201, 4.205–208**) are not totally unrelated and, consequently, make chronological precision difficult. If it could be demonstrated that the presentation of David was more Persian than Assyrian, Van Seter's later dating of the DtrH materials would become increasingly applicable and attractive (see above). In any event, the relative ease with which David (and Samson as well) dispatches his lion is quite similar to the scenes of encounter and control though the text is intent on giving the ultimate credit to Yahweh (1 Sam 17:37; cf. Judg 14:6).

⁴⁴ See Chapter 2 (§2.3.3; cf. also §2.3.2), especially Ezek 12:13; 17:20; Zech 11:16; Prov 28:15; and the princes in Ezek 22:25 and Zeph 3:3.

⁴⁵ Cf., e.g., R. E. Clements, *Deuteronomy* (OTG; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 30–31, on the law of the king (Deut 17:14–20): “At the same time there is no hint that he is anything other than an ordinary human being, so that all traces of an older divine mythology concerning the king's status are set aside.” Note also John Pairman Brown, “From Divine Kingship to Dispersal of Power in the Mediterranean City-State,” *ZAW* 105 (1993): 62–86, especially 73, who includes the portrayal of the king as a lion as one of the “[d]ivine attributes of the king” (69). It is significant, however, that Brown does not (cannot?) cite a single *biblical* text employing the motif—again, in marked contrast to the other cultures he treats.

found among the literature of ancient Israel's neighbors—especially with respect to the notion of divine royalty.⁴⁶ While there is continued debate about this phenomenon,⁴⁷ it seems that at least some (to be specific, some early) Mesopotamian kings, and especially Egyptian pharaohs, were divinized.⁴⁸ Several scholars have attempted to make the same case for (later) Levantine traditions of kingship.⁴⁹ But one need not establish the existence of deified royalty beyond a shadow of a doubt to note the close connections forged between the deity and the monarch that are apparent from several different avenues: for instance, the fact that rhetorical, metaphorical, and iconographical presentations in the royal and divine repertoires are highly similar and

⁴⁶ For a different, but related, possibility—that the leonine images and metaphors for God in the Hebrew Bible are an attempt to figure the deity in royal (perhaps Neo-Assyrian) garb—see §5.4 below.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., Martin Noth's "God, King, and Nation in the Old Testament," in *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 145–78, for a rebuttal of the Myth and Ritual school which often overstressed the king-god connection.

⁴⁸ At least post-mortem. One thinks especially of pre-Shulgi kings in Mesopotamia (note the presentation of Naram-Sin with horns on the famous Naram-Sin stela; *ANEP*, 309), but the writing of royal names, even in the later periods, with the DINGIR sign is not unimportant in this regard. Note, e.g., this phenomenon at work in the various versions of the Legend of Etana where the Old Version has "Etana," the Middle Assyrian Version has "ṁEtana," and the Late Version has "ḏEtana" (see J. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Legend of Etana: A New Edition* [Chicago: Bocharty-Carducci Publishers, 1985]). For Egyptian kingship, see the extensive treatments in David O'Connor and David P. Silverman, ed., *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (PdÄ 9; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), and, much more briefly, Brent A. Strawn, "Pharaoh," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (ed. David W. Baker and T. Desmond Alexander; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 631–36.

⁴⁹ See, e.g., Nicolas Wyatt, "The Religion of Ugarit: An Overview," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt; HdO I 39; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 529–85, especially 560–62; and G. del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion: According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit* (Bethesda: CDL, 1999), 166–212; cf. Mark S. Smith, *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), 211–12. But contrast Wayne T. Pitard, "Voices from the Dust: The Tablets from Ugarit and the Bible," in *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations* (ed. Mark W. Chavalas and K. Lawson Younger, Jr.; JSOTSup 341; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 251–75, especially 263–68 and the literature cited there. Pitard does grant the importance of KTU 1.161, which may reflect a type of *kispum*-ritual. So, similarly D. Pardee, "*Marzi'u*, *Kispu*, and the Ugaritic Funery Cult: A Minimalist View," in *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture, Edinburgh, July 1994: Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson* (ed. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson, and J. B. Lloyd; UBL 12; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 273–87. Note also Brian B. Schmidt, "A Re-Evaluation of the Ugaritic King List (KTU 1.113)," in Wyatt, Watson, and Lloyd, ed., *Ugarit, Religion and Culture*, 289–304, for that text's possible relationship to KTU 1.161. Whatever the case, the perduring question is the applicability of such data to southern areas (Israel/Palestine) and in later (especially IA) periods.

sometimes identical.⁵⁰ One need not have divine monarchs, that is, to be able to speak of monarchs that look and act like the gods, perhaps because they have a special relationship with the gods and owe them certain obligations. But there is no such similarity between the deity and the monarch with regard to leonine presentations in the Hebrew Bible. This lack of extended leonine metaphors or imagery associated with the king gives one pause, and leads one to posit that this scenario is an outgrowth of a royal theology that closely aligned, but nevertheless distinguished between, the monarch and God.⁵¹ Indeed, in my judgment, the absence of aggressive, militaristic, and positively-construed leonine metaphors in connection with the Israelite monarch indicates a different theology and ideology of kingship in Israel—at least at the level of the biblical texts. Marc Zvi Brettler, in his monograph on the metaphor of God as king, has argued similarly, though on the basis of different data. His conclusion is apropos: “The evidence suggests that one result of God becoming king was the *dethronement of certain aspects* of the human king.”⁵²

Certainly one must be careful not to overstate the argument.⁵³ It may be that the lack of a lion-king in the Hebrew Bible has to do with the nature of the evidence at our disposal. Neither royal annals nor extensive first-person royal

⁵⁰ For recent assessments, see John Day, ed., *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (JSOTSup 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), especially the articles by John Baines on Egypt (16–53) and W. G. Lambert on Mesopotamia (54–71). Note also the presentations of the deity and monarch as lions in Chapter 4 (§§4.3.2 and 4.4.3) as well as their respective battles with lions (§§4.3.1 and 4.4.1).

⁵¹ For other means—including morphological, contextual, and grammatical-syntactical ways—by which the kingship of God is kept separate from human kingship in the Hebrew Bible, see Marc Zvi Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (JSOTSup 76; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), *passim*, especially 49: “the biblical authors clarify that God’s kin[g]ship is qualitatively different from human kingship.” See also Noth, “God, King, and Nation,” especially 161–62, 175–76. While “qualitatively different” is well-stated for the Hebrew Bible, perhaps “quantitatively different” might obtain for some of the ancient Near Eastern data. See below.

⁵² Brettler, *God is King*, 74 (emphasis mine). See further *ibid.*, 159–68, especially 165: “the lack of words for גָּדוֹל, ‘great’ with Israelite kings is an *intentional* feature of the language of the biblical authors, who are trying to emphasize God’s royal superiority” (emphasis mine). Note also the discussion of aniconism and kingship in Patrick D. Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 21–22, which is not unrelated to this discussion.

⁵³ Henri Frankfort (*Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948], especially 337–44) is among those who have distinguished overly sharply between Mesopotamian and Egyptian notions of kingship, on the one hand, and Israelite notions, on the other. A more appreciative correlation is found in Roland de Vaux, “The King of Israel, Vassal of Yahweh,” in *idem*, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971), 152–66. See also J. J. M. Roberts, “In Defense of the Monarchy: The Contribution of Israelite Kingship to Biblical Theology,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 377–96, especially 379–80.

propaganda such as that preserved in Egyptian and Mesopotamian records has survived in the Hebrew Bible.⁵⁴ The authors of the closest analogue, the portions of the Deuteronomistic History dealing with the monarchy, seem mostly uninterested in providing that type of information, referring readers instead to the tantalizing but now lost “Book(s) of the Annal(s) of the Kings of Israel/Judah” (e.g., 1 Kgs 14:19, 29; and *passim*).⁵⁵ It may well be the case that leonine royal metaphors akin to those found in the ancient Near East were present in such annals—assuming they existed—and were applied to local Israelite or Judean kings. Perhaps the same could be said of still other lost works.⁵⁶ This cannot be denied. Absence of evidence, to cite the old adage, does not constitute evidence of absence. And yet, these annals—again, if they existed—are not found in the Hebrew Bible where there is clearly both absence of evidence *and* evidence of absence.⁵⁷ Hence, at the level of the ideology of kingship expressed in the biblical texts, it seems both fair and safe to say that the royal lion metaphor is almost entirely absent and that this, in turn, reflects something different or distinct about Israel’s theology of kingship as that is expressed in the canonical documents. Put another way, the lack of a lion-king reflects that the ideology of kingship expressed in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Deuteronomistic History,⁵⁸ is different at this point from leonine presentations of monarchs found elsewhere in the art and literatures of various cultures throughout the ancient Near East.

If such a lack could be shown to be purposeful—an exceedingly difficult task, despite the evidence presented above—it would be quite significant. It would indicate that leonine imagery in the militaristic vein was reserved not for the king, but for the deity. It is Yahweh, and Yahweh alone, who retains this imagery. It is Yahweh who deserves the glory in battle, who motivates mighty men to perform heroic deeds (even against lions!; see Judg 14:6), or who protects them in their battles (again, even against lions!; see 1 Sam 17:37). Yahweh, so often depicted as the Divine Warrior, is also (perhaps even by virtue of such) the Divine Lion. Kings cannot usurp that role. If this is indeed the dynamic at work,⁵⁹ there can be little doubt that this situation could be understood as a polemic against Israel’s ancient Near Eastern neighbors or, closer to home, even against Israel’s own monarchs and possible abuses of

⁵⁴ This is not to deny that the biblical texts have played propagandistic purposes at many points and times, including even—in the case of some texts—the time of their original inception.

⁵⁵ The Chronicler’s History is, of course, even more selective than DtrH.

⁵⁶ Such as the Book of Jashar (Josh 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18 [nb!]; cf. 1 Kgs 8:12–13 LXX) or the “Book of the Wars of Yahweh” (Num 21:14).

⁵⁷ The latter is clear when one compares the Hebrew Bible with the data from the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine.

⁵⁸ For more on Dtr and kingship, see Gerald Eddie Gerbrandt, *Kingship according to the Deuteronomistic History* (SBLDS 87; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

⁵⁹ It should go without saying that it can be interpreted as such regardless of a narrator’s original purpose.

power. In both cases, the Hebrew Bible would be placing restrictions on the monarch: there are limits to the power of the executive branch. There are powers, represented symbolically in language by imagery and metaphor, that are reserved for God alone. The lion is among such symbolic powers. But before turning to the Lion-God Yahweh, it is important to treat in greater detail the presence of the lion-master and the developed lion(ess) metaphor in Ezekiel 19 to see how they figure into this discussion.

5.3.2. *The Presence of the Lion-Master and the Lion(ess) Metaphor of Ezekiel 19*

In lieu of a developed tradition of the monarch and/or as the lion, the Hebrew Bible knows only of mighty individuals or warriors that are likened to lions (e.g., 2 Sam 17:10; 1 Chr 12:9). Apart from David, there are also two individuals who are said to have killed lions: Samson (Judges 14) and Benaiah (2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22).⁶⁰ These actions are akin to what is expected of monarchs but these individuals are not designated as such. When considered in the light of the previous section, the attribution of lion-killing actions to mighty individuals like Samson and Benaiah is not only in line with some data from the ancient Near Eastern context,⁶¹ it is also further evidence that the Hebrew Bible seems to go out of its way to avoid applying the same motif in positive fashion to Israelite monarchs proper.

The same judgment holds true for what is the most developed lion(ess) metaphor applied to Israelite royalty in the Hebrew Bible, Ezek 19:2–9. There is considerable debate over exactly who or what is represented by this lioness

⁶⁰ The account of Daniel and the lions' den (Daniel 6) is not unrelated, but is of a less violent sort.

⁶¹ E.g., Enkidu, or, from the Aegean, Heracles. Othniel Margalith has attempted to demonstrate that Samson's feat is actually dependent on Aegean forebears, especially as those might have been mediated via Philistia and its pottery (see "The Legends of Samson/Heracles," *VT* 37 [1987]: 63–70). Unfortunately, Margalith is not specific about which Mycenaean and Philistine pottery he is referring to, though there is some unpublished pottery from Ashkelon with a figure that battles a large fish or whale-type creature. (I am indebted to Sandra Richter for this information.) Whether this figure can be identified as Heracles, however, and, more specifically, Heracles in his second labor (to battle the Lernaean Hydra), is debatable, though the labors are already depicted in Greek art of the early archaic period. See *OCD* 685; and Aaron Jed Brody, "Each Man Cried Out to His God": *The Specialized Religion of Canaanite and Phoenician Seafarers* (HSM 58; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 36 and figs. 30, 32. Cf. also Marguerite Yon, "À propos de l'Héraklès de Chypre," in *Iconographie classique et identités régionales: Paris, 26 et 27 mai 1983* (ed. L. Kahil, C. Augé, et al.; Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1986), 287–97 for Melqart-Heracles iconography in Cyprus; and also the wide-ranging history-of-religions study (flawed in my judgment) of Alexander H. Krappe, "The Anatolian Lion God," *JAOS* 65 (1945): 144–54. Whatever the case, there is not, to my knowledge, any Philistine attestation of a figure battling lions that could be used to confirm Margalith's point (though one might appeal to **fig. 3.119**, from Gezer, depending on the date, which is debated). Much depends also on the specific dating of the Samson material in Judges.

and her two cubs.⁶² It seems probable that the cubs once referred to specific kings (Jehoahaz and Zedekiah?). The lioness, however, may be purely symbolic, representing the dynastic house or Judah as a whole, though some have thought her to be the queen mother Hamutal.⁶³

The precise referent for the lioness is of some interest because, as the oracle goes, this lioness was quite a lioness among lions (Ezek 19:2: **נִמְה אִמָּךְ לִבְיָא בֵּין אַרְיֹת**). That description can be understood more broadly than the metaphor itself: this lioness (and her cubs) actually does take her place within the broader ancient Near Eastern lion tradition. That is, this lioness acts much like what is expected in light of typical leonine metaphors in Mesopotamian and Egyptian royal inscriptions. Or, more accurately, her cubs do.⁶⁴ They catch prey (19:3, 6) and devour humans (19:3, 6). The second cub is still worse: raping widows and destroying cities (19:7). The violent, militaristic imagery that comes to the fore here, especially in the last-mentioned instance, clarifies the nature and tenor of this particular lion metaphor. It is shocking, disturbing, and violent, to be sure, but, in the context of ancient royal inscriptions, exactly the kind of activity that is typical of the king-as-lion image. Perhaps what is most striking about this oracle, then, is how the overall impression created in the presentation is, despite ancient Near Eastern analogues, nevertheless *negative*. The oracle is explicitly called a “dirge” (**קִינָה**; 19:1, 14). This genre-designation receives indirect support by the actions of those involved with these lions: the land and all in it are appalled (**שָׁמִים**) at the sound of the second lion’s roar (19:7); and the nations intervene with both lions, capturing them and deporting them “with hooks” (**בַּחֲזִים**) to their respective destinations (19:4, 9).

Hence, the situation in Ezekiel 19 is not unlike that in 1 Samuel 17. In Ezekiel 19, the most developed leonine metaphor in the Hebrew Bible where the metaphor actually does apply the lion image to royal entities in ways that are consonant with other Near Eastern usages, the text clearly steers away from according the metaphor any positive value. Whatever hopes the lioness (or lion-queen?) might have had for her cubs (her lion-like sons/kings) are thwarted (19:5). The irony is palpable: in the one passage that employs the connotations typical of leonine metaphor in Near Eastern royal inscriptions, the text indicates that these lions fail miserably and are captured.

⁶² See the discussion in Chapter 2 (§2.3.3).

⁶³ For a recent treatment of the queen mother, see Nancy R. Bowen, “The Quest for the Historical *Gšbrā*,” *CBQ* 63 (2001): 597–618.

⁶⁴ Iconographical or textual depictions of a raging, militaristic, and leonine queen are practically non-existent. In Egypt, there is Hatshepsut (1479–1457), who portrayed herself as a lion-sphinx (see **fig. 4.157**), but apart from her I know only of the late Meroitic queen Netekamani from the first-century “Lion Temple” at Naga (**fig. 4.105**). This raises questions about Ezekiel 19. In brief, it would appear that if the text refers to an *actual* woman (e.g., the queen mother Hamutal?) then the text would be *sui generis*. Alternatively, the lack of an ancient Near Eastern parallel might be taken as evidence that the text should be applied—not to a queen (mother)—but to the house of Judah or the dynastic line.

Here too, then, a curtailing of royal power and aspiration seems obvious. The other instances of royal leonine imagery, already discussed above, also fall into this trajectory: 1 Samuel 17 is allusive but with obvious naturalistic connections; 2 Samuel 1 may be a metaphor for strength only, having nothing to do with royal power *per se*. Cumulatively, then, the evidence on the monarch and leonine imagery and metaphor may be calculated to connect with and speak to Israel's ideology and theology of kingship—to be more specific, to *limit* that ideology and theology in important ways.

5.4. “YAHWEH ROARS FROM MOUNT ZION”: THE DEITY AS LION

It is noteworthy that, in marked contrast to the situation with the monarch/mighty one, the Hebrew Bible contains a plethora of lion images associated with Yahweh—so much so that, in several texts, Yahweh might well be described as a Lion-God. This is demonstrated not only by the many instances that employ lion metaphors for Yahweh (the whole book of Amos is virtually a case in point; see further §2.3.4), but also by the particular passages where lions are mentioned or associated with God. These latter include passages where the lion is a favorite or familiar of Yahweh (e.g., Ps 104:21–22; 111:5; Job 38:39–40) as well as instances where Yahweh uses the lion as the punitive tool of choice (1 Kings 13; 20; 2 Kgs 17:25–26; Isa 15:9; Jer 5:6; cf. §5.2 above). Also related are the places where Yahweh exercises protective power over lions (1 Sam 17:37; Ps 124:6; Daniel 6), or where the divine beings that serve God have leonine attributes (Ezek 1:10; 10:14; cf. 41:19 and 1 Kgs 7:29). One further aspect connecting Yahweh with the lion are those texts where Yahweh seems to be portrayed as a lion-hunter: hunting the wicked king-as-lion (e.g., Ezek 12:13; 17:20).⁶⁵

It is evident from Chapters 3–4 of this work that each of these uses of lions with Yahweh finds its correlate in the comparative evidence of the broader ancient Near East as well as in the archaeology of ancient Israel/Palestine. When the widespread use of the lion for God in the Hebrew Bible is considered with this comparative data, it becomes even more obvious how reticent the Hebrew Bible is to attribute leonine imagery to the monarch/mighty one. The *theological* implications of leonine metaphor are thus underscored: this is a metaphor reserved, in the main, for the Deity. While

⁶⁵ Hence, Theodore J. Lewis' comment that “[t]here is no explicit reference to Yahweh hunting lions, perhaps because it would have been deemed too anthropomorphic” (“CT 13.33–34 and Ezekiel 32: Lion-Dragon Myths,” *JAOS* 116 [1996]: 45) is in need of nuance. While these references in Ezekiel may not be *explicit*, they nevertheless seem to be proof to the contrary. Moreover, any avoidance—if there is such—might have little to do with anthropomorphism *per se*, since gods, not just humans, are frequently portrayed hunting lions in the comparative material (see §4.4.1, and, for ancient Israel/Palestine, **figs. 3.7–9**, etc.). That is, any avoidance—again, if there is such—could be for theological reasons *vis-à-vis* other deities, not just *vis-à-vis* anthropomorphism.

important, this is nevertheless a rather general inference; more specific conclusions can and should be drawn.

It might be stated, first, that the extensive use of the lion metaphor with Yahweh appears to be at odds with the immediate Canaanite context, at least in the *literary remains* presently available to us.⁶⁶ Simply put, we know of no other Canaanite deity that is figured like a lion to the extent that Yahweh is.⁶⁷ In fact, the lion is “far less prominent in the Canaanite descriptions of the divine than the bull metaphor.”⁶⁸ But the opposite situation obtains for the Hebrew Bible. One concludes, then, with Hempel, that there does not seem to be any vestige of an explicit anti-lion polemic in ancient Israel.⁶⁹ The significantly fewer instances of bull imagery applied to Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible—especially when seen from the perspective of the Ugaritic materials—indicates yet again what many scholars have thought: that the use or avoidance of a particular animal image might be motivated by religious and/or theological concerns.⁷⁰ On this point it is instructive to note that while El and Baal are

⁶⁶ I am well aware of the difficulties and problems in any attempt that would too easily and simplistically identify the Ugaritic data with the category “Canaanite.” See, e.g., John Day, “Ugarit and the Bible: Do They Presuppose the Same Canaanite Mythology and Religion”; Lester L. Grabbe, “‘Canaanite’: Some Methodological Observations in Relation to Biblical Study”; and Gregorio del Olmo Lete, “Approaching a Description of the Canaanite Religion of Ancient Israel: Methodological Issues”—all of which are found in *Ugarit and the Bible: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible: Manchester, September 1992* (ed. George J. Brooke, Adrian H. W. Curtis, and John F. Healey; UBL 11; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1994), 35–52, 113–22, 259–73, respectively.

⁶⁷ The only Levantine comparable of which we have textual evidence is Mot, but the data is meager (see §4.4.3.4).

⁶⁸ Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 538.

⁶⁹ J. Hempel, “Jahwegleichenisse der israelitischen Propheten,” *ZAW* 42 (1924): 100. The archaeological data from ancient Israel/Palestine lends still further support to this conclusion. See Chapter 3 and note, in particular, the lion over the dismembered head of a bull in **fig. 3.155** (unprovenanced).

⁷⁰ See, e.g., Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 538. This is not to say that bull imagery was not applied to Yahweh, which it certainly was (see, e.g., Patrick D. Miller, “El the Warrior,” in idem, *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* [JSOTSup 267; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], especially 33–36), only that it is applied to Yahweh (far) less frequently than lion imagery and that such avoidance may be due to aspects of the cult of El that were ultimately rejected in the Hebrew Bible (see John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* [JSOTSup 265; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002], 34–41; Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* [2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 50, 84–85). The matter is, of course, far more complex when speaking of ancient Israel outside and beyond the presentation found in the Hebrew Bible (see, e.g., Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 34 n. 58; W. Herrmann, “El,” *DDD*, 274–80).

frequently called or associated with bulls in the Ugaritic texts, the same is not true for these deities and lions.⁷¹

There is more going on in the use of the lion image with reference to Yahweh than simple contrast, however. There is also a good bit of similarity between the way the Hebrew Bible and the comparative contexts employ the lion image for deities—especially when one includes non-textual and extra-Canaanite data. This similarity is notable insofar as the lion is frequently found with *female* deities in the ancient Near Eastern context.⁷² To be sure, male deities also occur with the lion, but it is with the female deities that leonine associations are most prevalent. Or, to put it differently, the most important lion deities are female. The parade examples are, of course, Ishtar in Mesopotamia and parts west (especially via Asherah; note also Qudšu) and Sekhmet (among others) in Egypt. What can be made of this in light of the frequent association of Yahweh with lions in the Hebrew Bible? Might it be argued that the portrayal of Yahweh as a kind of lion-god is an example of something that originally belonged to the realm of the goddess having been incorporated into Yahweh's persona? Is it possible that the leonine Yahweh owes his felinity to a goddess?

Precision when tracing genetic relationships among deities, let alone deity traits, is exceedingly difficult. Certainty is typically not to be had.⁷³ Even so, with that caveat duly entered, the data presented in Chapters 3–4 indicates that an attempt, at least, can be made in inquiring after the origins of Yahweh's leonine metaphors. There are at least two possible sources for the motif if it is, in fact, derivative and not *sui generis*. The sources are the realm of the gods and the realm of the monarch. As already seen above, the two are not unrelated. Still, they can be treated separately and, for obvious reasons, the gods are taken up first.

5.4.1. *Yahweh and the Lion-Gods*

As already indicated, Levantine *textual* references for a leonine deity akin to Yahweh are practically nil. At Ugarit, El is the bull (𐎎𐎗), and Baal, too, has occasional bull associations. The incorporation of El aspects into Yahweh is

⁷¹ But see §4.4.3.4 and Appendix 1 on Ugaritic *ary*. The Ugaritic term is used to describe offspring or siblings of Athirat, El, Baal, and Mot—but also Danel. While it is at least possible that *ary* is some kind of leonine designation, it is significant that another Ugaritic text, *KTU* 6.62, uses *arw* to refer unambiguously to a lion (the inscription is actually on a lion-head), indicating that caution is in order with respect to *ary*.

⁷² To the literature already cited in Chapter 4, add the study by Hans Möbius, “Die Göttin mit dem Löwen,” in *Festschrift für Wilhelm Eilers: Ein Dokument der internationalen Forschung zum 27. September 1966* (ed. Gernot Wiessner; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967), 449–68.

⁷³ Cf., e.g., Smith's difficulty in deciding whether bull imagery in particular contexts is to be associated with Baal or El (*The Early History of God*, 84–85). Such an example could be repeated *ad infinitum*.

thus unhelpful for a discussion of lion metaphors, and Baal aspects—whether accepted or rejected⁷⁴—are also non-leonine. The point with Baal is important given the connections between the lion and the storm(-god) that are often drawn by scholars. Such connections are drawn from many different bases, including even the syntagmatic (see further below). However, iconographically, it should be pointed out that many of the storm-gods are found, not with lions, but with leonine composites—either the winged lion-griffin/eagle or the winged lion-dragon (*uṣumgallu*; cf. **fig. 4.263**)⁷⁵—and with bulls.⁷⁶ Moreover, the iconographical evidence for the association of the male storm-god and the lion—again, typically lion-composites—seems to be mostly early (Akkadian or earlier) and eastern.⁷⁷ Still further, one finds that in several

⁷⁴ There is evidence of both incorporation and conflict when it comes to Baal and Yahweh, though the tendency in older scholarship was primarily to set the two in opposition. See now Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 68–127; Smith, *The Early History of God*, 65–101.

⁷⁵ See A. Vanel, *L'iconographie du dieu de l'orage dans le Proche-Orient ancien jusqu'au VII^e siècle avant J.-C.* (CahRB 3; Paris: Gabalda, 1965), 159–60 and figs. 3, 5–8, 11, 21–22, 49, 74, 77 (cf. also Daniel Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien nach den schriftlichen Quellen* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001], 124–25); especially 160: “L’*uṣumgallu*...est le dragon spécifique du dieu de l’orage dans la glyptique agadéenne et l’héritier de l’aigle léontocéphale et du lion ailé de la période dynastique archaïque mésopotamienne.” So also J. C. Greenfield, “Hadad,” *DDD*, 377–82, especially 379; and Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (BJSUCSD 8; Winona Lake: Eisenbruans, 2003), 27–34, 85–88, who tracks the advent of the *uṣumgallu* to the Akkadian Period and associates it with fertility.

⁷⁶ As Vanel points out, the lion-dragon or lion-griffin was replaced by the bull: “A partir de l’époque néo-sumérienne et peut-être sous l’influence ‘amorite’, l’*uṣumgallu* semble avoir été supplanté par le taureau aussi bien comme monture habituelle du dieu de l’orage que comme symbole de fertilité” (*L'iconographie du dieu de l'orage*, 160; figs. 1–2, 7, 10–14, 19–20, 23 [note the bull/lion-dragon composite], 26–27, 32–34, 41, 48, 50–51, 60, 70–71, 74–77). The lion continues to be found, of course, but in its pure form is less pronounced (see *ibid.*, figs. 4 [?], 50 [?], 28–29, 79). Even where it does exist in contexts with the storm-god, it is often associated, not with the male deity, but with associated female goddesses (*ibid.*, figs. 12, 44, 58; note that the storm-god’s consort can also be represented on the lion-dragon [figs. 5–7], though at times she is pictured on a bull [figs. 32, 34], or, both [fig. 47])! One notes the testimony of Lucian (2d century CE), that Atargatis was supported by lions, while the male god sat on bulls (*De Dea Syria* 31, cf. 15). See Harold W. Attridge and Robert A. Oden, ed., *The Syrian Goddess (De Dea Syria) Attributed to Lucian* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 43 and 23, respectively; H. J. W. Drijvers, “Atargatis,” *DDD*, 114–16; and R. A. Oden, Jr., *Studies in Lucian’s De Syria Dea* (HSM 15; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), especially 47–107. For more on the bull and the storm-god, see Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 18–24, 107–12.

⁷⁷ See Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 15–17. The two main examples are Ningirsu/Ninurta (see **fig. 4.271**) and Iškur (perhaps also Dagan). It will be recalled that the latter comes to be associated with Adad, who is associated, not with the lion, but with the bull (*ibid.*, 23; and, further, 48–60, 71). See also, *ibid.*, 112 for the Anatolian deity

cases the main (often storm-)gods in western areas are not leonine but their female consorts are. One thinks of Hittite Tishpak and his consort, Hebat (**fig. 4.259**),⁷⁸ but perhaps also of Ugaritic El⁷⁹ and his consort, Athirat, who is often thought to have lion connections.⁸⁰ For the biblical materials, however, the pairing seems to be Baal and Asherah.⁸¹ In the latter two cases, then, the storm imagery might be the purview of El or Baal (depending on the corpus) and the lion-imagery the purview of Asherah. Could she be the origin of the lion motif in Yahweh?⁸²

This seems at least possible since the storm-gods seem largely un-leonine in the west, at least in the late second and first millennia. However, that judgment is not entirely accurate—further details must be taken into consideration. First, the textual connections between Athirat/Asherah and the lion are minimal at best. Second, the connection of the Qudšu-type plaques to Asherah has been problematized by the work of Wiggins.⁸³ Third, even if these depictions do refer to Asherah it is certain that: a) they do not refer to this specific goddess alone (see **figs. 4.251–256**; cf. **fig. 4.258**); and b) these presentations portray the goddess, in the main, in her fertility aspect(s) (note the nudity, lotus blossoms, water, etc.) with the lion being used as an animal mount within that general tableau. Fertility is not, however, the accent that

with leonine connections that Green identifies as a “War-god” who “was conceived as a *separate* deity performing a *separate* function from that of the Water-god or the Storm-god” (emphasis mine).

⁷⁸ But note Tishpak’s possible role in the slaying of the *labbu* in *CT* 13.33–34. See §4.2.3 for a discussion.

⁷⁹ Perhaps through the bull connections. For the storm and the bull in early Mesopotamia, see Mary Kathleen Brown, “Symbolic Lions: A Study in Ancient Mesopotamian Art and Literature” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1973). For the bull and Baal, see Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal: Late Bronze and Iron Age I Periods (c 1500–1000 BCE)* (OBO 140; Fribourg: University Press Fribourg Switzerland, 1994), 142, 165, 168, etc.

⁸⁰ See, e.g., Judith M. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 187, 209. But note the important cautions of Steve A. Wiggins: “The Myth of Asherah: Lion Lady and Serpent Goddess,” *UF* 23 (1991): 383–94; and idem, *A Reassessment of “Asherah”: A Study According to the Textual Sources of the First Two Millennia B.C.E.* (AOAT 235; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 94 and n. 14, 114, 120. Wiggins’ argument that there is no association of Asherah with lions whatsoever at Ugarit may be incorrect, however, depending on the translation of *ʾbrt aryh*, often used to describe Athirat’s offspring (see above, §4.4.3.4, and Appendix 1).

⁸¹ See, e.g., Gerald L. Mattingly, “Asherah,” *DANE*, 34; idem, “Baal,” *DANE*, 41–42. This biblical pairing of Baal and Asherah is probably secondary (given the rejection of Asherah in the Hebrew Bible; see Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 42), erroneous (given the Ugaritic data), and susceptible to different understandings (see Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 207).

⁸² See Smith, *The Early History of God*, 200–202, for the incorporation of El and Asherah elements into Yahweh. For Asherah exclusively, see *ibid.*, 133–47.

⁸³ Wiggins, “The Myth of Asherah”; idem, *A Reassessment of “Asherah”*.

receives emphasis in the leonine depictions of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible. Far from it!

Things seem at an impasse. Early East Semitic male (storm-)gods are often presented with lions and in martial form (**fig. 4.271**) but this connection seems underdeveloped in the west for later periods.⁸⁴ In ancient Israel/Palestine, especially in the LBA, there are depictions of male gods with lions but the presentation is mostly of those gods hunting or smiting lions (**figs. 3.7–9**; see also **fig. 3.111** from IA III/Persian Period). Again, not excepting the importance of Ezek 12:13; 17:20 (see above), the presentation of Yahweh is typically not as a lion-hunter, nor lion-killer, but as a *lion itself*. Egypt, for its part, has a number of lion gods, but the ones that are most clearly represented in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine are Amun and Bes. A number of IA I seals portraying a lion apparently venerate Amun (**figs. 3.35–45**) but do so quite subtly—largely by using the lion cryptographically in the writing of the god’s name.⁸⁵ They do not, that is, present Amun as “the wild-eyed lion with grim claws” that we hear of in Egyptian inscriptions. Bes appears in the IA III/Persian Period as the “Lord of the Lions” (**figs. 3.109–110**), but, again, while not completely unrelated to Yahweh’s *control* of lions, this sort of presentation does not have much bearing on the metaphorical portrayal of Yahweh *as* a lion. These data, when considered alongside the previous judgments about the female god with lion—often associated with fertility and for which textual references are slim, at best, in the west and in the later periods—raise the question: In what sense, then, can it be said that ancient Near Eastern lion-gods are the source of the lion-like Yahweh?

Despite the council of despair presented above, there are yet two possibilities that commend themselves as possible progenitors of the kind of imagery that Yahweh manifests in the Hebrew Bible in leonine guise. The *first* is Baal-Seth, who is frequently found riding on the back of the lion, sometimes with Reshef (cf. **figs. 3.46–49**).⁸⁶ Seth was identified with Baal in Egypt at the

⁸⁴ For the storm-god’s warrior aspects, especially in the early periods, see Green, *The Storm-God*, 15 and elsewhere.

⁸⁵ In addition to the discussion in Chapter 3 (§3.3), see Othmar Keel, *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit: Einleitung* (OBO.SA 10; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1995), 214–15.

⁸⁶ The main work is Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, especially 143–45, 181–82, 196. See also idem, “Some Additional Representations of the God Baal-Seth on Seal-Amulets,” *JNSL* 22 (1996): 157–66; Othmar Keel in Othmar Keel/Menakhem Shuval/Christoph Uehlinger, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel III* (OBO 100; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1990), 202–204; 304–308; and Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 209–10. For Reshef and the lion, note also *KTU* 6.62, discussed above. But see Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 196, for why the winged-figure-on-lion on seals cannot be Reshef.

time of the New Kingdom.⁸⁷ A connection between the two gods can be established especially in those iconographical pieces where Seth is named in the associated inscription(s) but where his attributes are non-Egyptian and not typical for him;⁸⁸ or, alternatively, when the deity in question appears to be Baal but is depicted with wings.⁸⁹ Here, then, is some positive evidence for those who desire to connect the lion with the storm-god with possible ramifications for the leonine Yahweh. Still, in many of the depictions of Baal-Seth, decidedly martial aspects are neither entirely clear nor obvious. Such aspects are more apparent in seals that portray Baal, armed with sword/spear⁹⁰ or bow, with lion mount (e.g., **figs. 3.50–51**; cf. **fig. 4.237**).⁹¹ Yet even here there are problems in “matching” attributes of Baal-Seth (especially the Sethian side of the equation) with the typical tenors of the leonine metaphors of Yahweh.⁹²

⁸⁷ Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Ba'al*, 143; K. van der Toorn, “Seth,” *DDD*, 748–49; Smith, *Untold Stories*, 230 n. 62; and, more extensively, H. te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion: A Study of His Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion* (2d ed.; PdÄ 6; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 109, 120–29; and Rainer Stadelmann, *Syrisch-palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten* (PdÄ 5; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 32–47. The identification is typically assigned to Dynasty 18, but Cornelius, “Some Additional Representations,” 161–62 n. 10 indicates that the first representation of Baal-Seth might be on a cylinder seal from Avaris that dates to the first half of the 18th century.

⁸⁸ See Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Ba'al*, 134, who writes: “These attributes indicate that this is actually Ba'al....The Egyptians identified Ba'al with their Egyptian storm-god Seth...but each of these two deities has a unique iconography.” Cf. *ibid.*, 143–44, 159–61. For Seth as a storm-god, see J. Zandee, “Seth als Sturmgott,” *ZÄS* 90 (1963): 144–56; te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 128–29; and note also Seth’s identification with Hittite Tishpak/Teshub (van der Toorn, “Seth,” 748; te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 109, 119–21).

⁸⁹ Otherwise “unknown for the Canaanite Ba'al” (Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Ba'al*, 144; see also 161, 181, 253, and especially 166 on *KTU* 1.46 line 6: *bʾl knp*). Despite the identification of Baal and Seth, note the seal (*ibid.*, Pl. 47 no. BM 22) where the two gods are presented together and thus differentiated. Cornelius calls this piece “unique and exceptional” (*ibid.*, 143).

⁹⁰ Or, perhaps, *wʾm*-scepter. See Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Ba'al*, 204 for a discussion.

⁹¹ Cf. also (and more broadly) other depictions of gods that may be storm deities (some possibly Baal or Baal-Seth) and that also have lion mounts (see, e.g., **figs. 4.236–239**), but especially gods in martial presentations with lion mounts (e.g., **figs. 4.234–235**). Note also the rampant lion in **fig. 4.297**, which contains the inscription “Temple of the Weather God” and the unique stelae from the temple of Adad (nb!) at Tell Rimah (**fig. 4.301**). But note that gods associated with other phenomena are also depicted with lions (e.g., **figs. 4.240–241**). The storm and lion connection is not, therefore, unequivocal.

⁹² See, conveniently, van der Toorn, “Seth,” 748–49; Manfred Lurker, *An Illustrated Dictionary of the Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 109–10; and, more extensively, te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, especially 138–51. These works highlight Seth’s connections to darkness, chaos, chthonic elements, foreign lands, the desert, and his manifestation by the “cruel sea” (Lurker, *Illustrated Dictionary*, 109). Ultimately, Seth seems to have been “a figure symbolic of all evil”

A still more basic problem is even being certain which specific gods these images depict. “Baal-Seth” is, after all, something of a scholarly construct to explain anomalies in the iconographical depiction of either or both of these deities.⁹³ The problem is made worse by the necessary but always-vexed adjudication of textual and iconographical material.⁹⁴ Simply put, not all of the leonine associations that are found with particular deities in the texts are found in the iconography (e.g., Amun) nor, conversely, are those that are presented in the iconography always present in the texts (e.g., Baal/Baal-Seth).⁹⁵ The problem is especially pronounced, in my judgment, with Baal/Baal-Seth. The lack of leonine associations with Baal in the Ugaritic materials—indubitably our most extensive and native database for this deity, unlikely to be surpassed—has already been underscored above and remains a most serious impediment to tracing Yahweh’s leonine aspects only to him. It is also notable, even if one is reluctant to grant the existence of problems regarding the identification of Baal/Baal-Seth on seal-amulets, that that figure’s relationship with the lion is not exclusive: he is also found without animal attributes as well as with other animals.⁹⁶ Once again there is also the lion-killing motif—

(ibid., 110). But, again, Yahweh’s leonine connections are not so much chaotic and evil as punitive and martial (see §2.3.4). On this score it is worth noting that Green is unable to connect Yahweh’s storm-god presentation in the Hebrew Bible with any leonine antecedent or referent, despite his attempt to closely associate the storm and lion elsewhere in his book (see *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 219–92, especially 219–80).

⁹³ Though this is not to say that the construction is without merit or support. Note, e.g., those instances where the divine name Baal is written in Egyptian with the Seth-animal determinative (Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 143; te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 120, 129; WĀS 1:447). Moreover, several iconographical contexts clearly show Seth in foreign, Baal dress (see te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, 124–26); indeed, “not a single image of Baal has been found in Egypt, in which he is not also Seth” (ibid., 126). The issue is more complicated, however, for non-Egyptian pieces—particularly anepigraphic seals from ancient Israel/Palestine, and it is, in fact, only on seal-amulets that the winged-god-on-lion type appears. Note Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 161: “in Canaan the identification of Seth with Baal *did not exist* and the god was known as Baal by the general population (*including* Egyptians residing there)” (emphasis mine). Cf. further ibid., 197 and n. 1, 209; and Cornelius, “Some Additional Representations,” 163.

⁹⁴ Note, e.g., Cornelius’ unfortunate exclusion, though for understandable reasons, of a full analysis of the inscriptional evidence in his otherwise thorough study (*The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 12–13).

⁹⁵ The problems include the nature of the media involved (e.g., seals are typically too small to contain identifying inscriptions) or the broader artistic tradition (it is more difficult to identify Canaanite deities, than, say, Egyptian ones given the former’s more-typically anthropomorphic form). See Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 14.

⁹⁶ Particularly the horse, but also serpents or monsters of various sorts. See Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 209–24, 262–63. The horse-connection is also true, of course, for Qudšu (see ibid., 209 n. 1, 211).

attested for Baal/Baal-Seth,⁹⁷ but noticeably lacking for Yahweh. So, while Baal-Seth must remain a potential option in the search for a divine leonine antecedent for Yahweh (see further below), the issue is far from settled yet.

There is, however, a *second* possibility—in addition to Baal-Seth—that must be considered. This second possibility involves the female goddess who is connected with the lion but who manifests that connection in ways beyond the realm of fertility, in ways that are, in fact, punitive and martial. But, to be precise, the goddess that fits such a description is in actuality not a singular entity. At least two deities present themselves as potential candidates for the job: Ishtar and Sekhmet require special consideration.

First, Ishtar. Ishtar was, of course, the lion-goddess *par excellence* in Mesopotamia. She is frequently depicted with lions, with the latter serving as her mount or as her subdued animal, or even both (see §4.4.2 and **figs. 4.242–249**; cf. **fig. 4.250**). Such images present the goddess in her warlike aspect; she is typically heavily armed, with scimitar, bow, and quiver, dominating the lion more than riding on it (see, especially, **figs. 4.242–245, 4.248**). There can be no doubt that the last aspect lends as much weight to her military presentation as does the extensive weaponry. The textual sources connecting Ishtar and the lion are even more explicit and more martial (see §4.4.3.2). Only Ishtar is called “lioness” (*labbatu*) or even “the (divine) Lioness” (^d*labbatu*). As such, she roars at the earth with the result every bit as deleterious as those of Yahweh when he roars (e.g., Amos 1:2). Like Yahweh, lioness Ishtar rages, stalks, and is presented as a fierce predator. Here, then, is a possible ancestor—a matriarch, as it were!—in the leonine lineage of Yahweh.

But what can be said of Ishtar in ancient Israel/Palestine? Tally Ornan has pointed out that representations of Ishtar in the 1st-millennium are somewhat rare, at least in monumental art.⁹⁸ Indeed, in the 9th–7th centuries, Ishtar appears mostly on minor art, not the monumental.⁹⁹ Even so, one might note the Neo-Assyrian lion orthostats at the temple of Ishtar at Nimrud (**fig. 4.298**), which, while unusual for the period,¹⁰⁰ continue to connect the goddess with the lion in monumental ways. Or, consider the Ishtar gate of Neo-Babylonian times (**fig. 4.313**), with perhaps as many as 120 lions! That being said, there are actually a number of representations of Ishtar in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine.¹⁰¹ In fact, “Ishtar is the *only* one of the Assyrian

⁹⁷ Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 223; cf. **figs. 3.9, 4.216**.

⁹⁸ See Tallay Ornan, “Ištar as Depicted on Finds from Israel,” in *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* (ed. Amihai Mazar with Ginny Mathias; JSOTSup 331; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 238, though she does note the stela of Shamas-resh-usur where Ishtar is behind Adad.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹⁰⁰ In the main, orthostats of composite creatures were preferred at this point in time. See Dominique Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 137.

¹⁰¹ See Ornan, “Ištar as Depicted on Finds from Israel,” 235–56.

deities who appears in anthropomorphic form on Iron Age IIC Palestinian stamp seals.”¹⁰² Most of these objects show evidence of local variants, traits, and the like and are thus local products—imitations, perhaps, of imports, but locally manufactured.¹⁰³ Ornan draws the following conclusion from this:

The locally made products that depict Ištar, and the use of Assyrian traits exemplified here by the seal from Lachish, suggest adaptation of Assyrian imagery by local artisans and imply penetration of the worship of Ištar into [the] local cult.¹⁰⁴

While several of the local Ishtar depictions show her in her martial aspect (i.e., armed), there is one piece from ancient Israel/Palestine that is especially important for the present study. It is the pendant from Tel Mique-Ekron, dating to the late 8th or 7th century (**fig. 3.84**).¹⁰⁵ Here, then, is evidence that Ishtar in her martial *and* leonine aspects was known in ancient Israel/Palestine in the Iron Age. Further knowledge of Ishtar, though not necessarily with leonine aspects, might be indicated by the opaque mentions of the “Queen of Heaven” (מַלְכַּת הַשָּׁמַיִם) in Jer 7:18; 44:17–19, 25.¹⁰⁶ Many scholars have argued that this queen is, in fact, Ishtar, not only given the existence of “Queen of Heaven” (*malkat šam%mi*, *šarrat šam%mi*, etc.) as one of her epithets, but also given the fact that the Hebrew word for the cakes (*kaww%nîm*) offered to the queen in Jer 7:18 and 44:19 is an Akkadian loanword from *kam%nu*, one of the terms used to designate certain offerings to Ishtar.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the jury is still out on the Queen of Heaven of Jeremiah and many other possibilities have been proposed, including Asherah, Anat, Qudšu, and Astarte. Indeed, it is intriguing to entertain the possibility that this queen may in fact be composite—Astarte, for example, “in syncretism with her Mesopotamian

¹⁰² Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 292 (emphasis mine); see also 370 and 293 illus. 286–288c (from Shechem, Ashdod, Beth-Shean and Dor); and cf. 297 illus. 289 (Megiddo).

¹⁰³ See Ornan, “Ištar as Depicted on Finds from Israel,” 235, 244, 248–49, 251–52.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 251.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 246 n. 22 and 248; see also Seymour Gitin, “The Neo-Assyrian Empire and its Western Periphery: The Levant, with a Focus on Philistine Ekron,” in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995* (ed. S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 77–103, especially 93 and n. 58, 102 fig. 21; and *idem*, “Tel Mique-Ekron in the 7th Century B.C.E.: The Impact of Economic Innovation and Foreign Cultural Influences on a Neo-Assyrian Vassal City-State,” in *Recent Excavations in Israel: A View to the West: Reports on Kabri, Nami, Mique-Ekron, Dor and Ashkelon* (ed. Seymour Gitin; Dubuque: Archaeological Institute of America, 1995), 61–79.

¹⁰⁶ The literature is immense. See Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 144–50 and the literature cited there; more briefly, William J. Fulco, “Ishtar,” *ABD* 3:521–22.

¹⁰⁷ See Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 148; *HALOT* 2:466; *CAD* K, 110–11; *AHW* 1:430; C. Houtman, “Queen of Heaven,” *DDD*, 678–80.

equivalent Ishtar.”¹⁰⁸ The identification of different goddesses with Ishtar (and others) may well be the best option, especially given Keel and Uehlinger’s caution that even the objects that definitely represent Ishtar in IA Palestine

permit no conclusion regarding how the goddess was accepted locally. To date, such seals have not been found in Judah, which means that to identify the ‘Queen of Heaven’ *exclusively* with the Assyrian deity Ishtar, *and no other* possible deity, cannot be the last word on the subject.¹⁰⁹

For the time being, then, it seems wise to set aside the Jeremiah references as uncertain. But, as Keel and Uehlinger indicate, even the seals depicting Ishtar do not allow any definitive conclusions with regard to the local acceptance of the goddess, especially in the cult. The identification (Day’s “syncretism”) of different goddesses with Ishtar and others is an intriguing topic to pursue in this regard and I will return to it below. Still, for the purposes of the present study, it is enough to state that the Tel Mique-Ekron pendant does attest to knowledge of Ishtar, armed and with lion, in the land, in the Iron Age. She remains, then, an attractive possible progenitor of Yahweh’s leonine presentation.

But, as important as the Tel Mique-Ekron pendant is, it is—to this point at least—solitary. The other images of Ishtar recovered from ancient Israel/Palestine do not portray her in exactly the same way. So, as important as Ishtar is and may have been, the case of Yahweh’s leonine lineage is still not yet closed. There is a *second* goddess to be considered: Sekhmet.

Sekhmet’s leonine profile is, like Ishtar’s, quite similar to Yahweh’s. It will be remembered from Chapter 4 (see §4.4.3.1) that she came to be considered the consort of Ptah and the mother of the leonine Nefertem, forming with these two the Memphite triad of the New Kingdom. Frequently portrayed as a lioness, especially as a leontocephaline (see, e.g., **fig. 4.275**), Sekhmet was the goddess of war and sickness. She caused diseases, either directly or through her messengers; and annual epidemics were blamed on her activity. The hot desert winds were sometimes identified as her fiery breath. Sekhmet was also a warrior: fighting the enemies of Ra, defeating Apophis, and killing the companions of (nb!) Seth. It is thus clear that it is her dangerous, violent, martial, and punitive sides that receive special emphasis and this is an accent that makes sense of, and with, her leonine presentation. Only the cult could assuage this lion.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 150; referring also to Susan Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (HSM 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 5–35. For Astarte (alone) as the Queen of Heaven, see Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 148–150.

¹⁰⁹ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 294 (their italics).

¹¹⁰ The breach of responsibilities (covenantal or otherwise) that is often found in conjunction with Yahweh’s leonine presentation might be profitably compared (cf., e.g., Jer 25:30, 38; Hos 5:14; 6:1 [note לְשׁוֹרָה]; 2 Kgs 17:25–26 [note יָרָא and מִשְׁפָּט]; etc.).

Sekhmet's lion pedigree is thus secure and quite similar to Ishtar, on the one hand, and Yahweh, on the other. What makes her candidacy as possible progenitor of and for Yahweh's leonine heritage slightly more attractive than Ishtar is the fact that her presence in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine is somewhat more substantial. There is, first, the Hebrew seal of *lzb bn ts* (fig. 3.86), which probably depicts Sekhmet (or Bastet), though its unprovenanced nature makes it of limited use. Of much more significance is the large number of Egyptian or Egyptianizing amulets found in ancient Israel/Palestine. Christian Herrmann has catalogued some 83 amulets of Sekhmet¹¹¹ from Megiddo, Beth-Shean, Tell el-Farḥah (N.), Tell en-Naḥbeh, Gezer, Beth-Shemesh, Jerusalem, Sheikh Zuweid, Lachish, Tell el-Farḥah (S.), Tell el-Ḥajjul, Tell es-Safi, Serāḥ, Achziv, Tell Abu Hawam, Ashkelon, and Tel Gerisa.¹¹² They range in time from the LBA (IIB) through the Persian Periods, though the majority of them belong to IA II.¹¹³ Keel and Uehlinger, writing of the late IA, have noted such Sekhmet objects (which, according to them, one "often sees") and state

This raises the question of whether the popularity of these deities [Isis, Sekhmet, etc.] might not also be due to the fact that a point of contact is provided that links the lion and the goddess once again, as had been done long ago.¹¹⁴

This observation leads to at least three points that deserve further consideration: 1) that several different deities might be leonine; 2) that the goddess-lion connection was known earlier in the archaeological record, but 3) drops out only to reappear somewhat later. On the first point, it might be said that although a number of Egyptian gods and goddess are leontomorphic (see §4.4.3), such presentations are not found in the amulets of ancient Israel/Palestine for goddesses other than Sekhmet.¹¹⁵ Important Egyptian lion gods, like Mahes, do not occur at all,¹¹⁶ and Nefertem, while present, is not leontomorphically portrayed.¹¹⁷ There are, of course, a number of Bes representations, but the amulets do not lay special emphasis on his leonine connections,¹¹⁸ though some seals from IA III/Persian Period do attest his

¹¹¹ Or perhaps her more benevolent counterpart, Bastet. See further below.

¹¹² Christian Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel* (OBO 138; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1994), 146–96. See also Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 350 and 352 illus. 338a–b; Keel, *Corpus: Einleitung*, 218.

¹¹³ A piece from Gezer may be as late as the Hellenistic period. See Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, 195 (#145). The Jerusalem piece is IA IIB.

¹¹⁴ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 350.

¹¹⁵ See, e.g., Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, 111–31, on Isis.

¹¹⁶ Though one should note the 15 items catalogued by Herrmann of a lion-headed figure though the specific deity is uncertain (*ibid.*, 395–403). These span from LBA IIB through the Persian Period.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 240–46.

¹¹⁸ See *ibid.*, 316–91, but note that 13 of the 15 indeterminate lion-headed representations listed by Herrmann are classified by him as "Bes-like" (*ibid.*, 395–401).

mastery of lions (see **figs. 3.109–110**). It would appear, then, that Keel and Uehlinger's statement about connections between the lion and the goddess has mostly to do with Sekhmet and only then, by extension, other deities, perhaps due to Sekhmet's occasional representation with them. Of course, the Tel Migne-Ekron pendant shows that non-Egyptian goddesses were also portrayed with the lion.

The second point has been demonstrated in Chapter 3 (see also Chapter 4) of this work; it need not be repeated. The third point, however, is intriguing. Why, given the long tradition of the goddess-lion connection, would it drop out only to recur later? These are, of course, two distinct questions that can be treated independently. The first, the disappearance of the motif, has been traced in Chapter 3 (see, e.g., §3.4) and may be related to the general decline in goddess portrayals in the IA, especially when compared to the LBA or MBA (see §3.2).¹¹⁹ The female deity and the lion are most clearly represented, that is, in the earlier periods (see, e.g., **figs. 3.1–6** from LBA; §3.7 and **fig. 3.158** on the el-Khadr arrowheads from IA I). Although the representation of the male god with the lion continues—after a lack in IA II—into the IA III/Persian Period, the main exemplars represent exotic gods, imported from other regions: Bes and Heracles, especially (see **figs. 3.109–110, 3.112–119**, cf. **fig. 3.125**).

On the basis of all this data it is tempting to conclude that Yahweh has absorbed the lion connections from elsewhere, and that, further, the most likely origins of those connections were from the realm of the goddess. Given their leonine profiles, it is the warlike Ishtar and Sekhmet that are the antecedents most similar to Yahweh, and the archaeological record bears witness to the availability of their imagery at various times in the history of the region. An additional observation that must not be overlooked, however, is the identification of various goddesses with each other or with some of their associates. For Sekhmet, for instance, there were Mut, Mehit of This, Bastet, and others (see §4.4.3.1). In Egypt, Sekhmet was identified with Astarte and worshipped as such from Dynasty 18 through the Ptolemaic period (see **fig. 4.276**). Astarte is, of course, the West Semitic equivalent of Ishtar.¹²⁰ She is often thought to be the consort of Baal “but there is no direct evidence for this at Ugarit.”¹²¹ What is clearer at Ugarit and elsewhere, however, is the confusing mixture of Astarte with other goddesses like Anat and

¹¹⁹ See further Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 133–281.

¹²⁰ Astarte is the Greek form as given by Philo of Byblos (Ἀστάρτη). In Ugaritic it is *ḥtrt* (Athtartu or the like), which comes into Hebrew variously as עֲשֶׁת־רִת or עֲשֶׁת־רִתָּה (the latter often taken as a plural form). See Gwendolyn Leick and Alan R. Millard, “Astarte,” *DANE*, 40; Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 132, also 150; idem, “Ashtoreth (Deity),” *ABD* 1:491–94; N. Wyatt, “Astarte,” *DDD*, 109–14; and Fulco, “Ishtar,” 3:521.

¹²¹ Wyatt, “Astarte,” 110. Day speculates that, given the Astarte-Baal connection, perhaps the goddess was also perceived at times to be Yahweh's consort, though he grants that “there is no explicit evidence of this” (Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 132).

Asherah/Athiratu. Various mergers of these goddesses with each other and with others, including Ishtar, undoubtedly took place.¹²² There is, in short, a “complex pattern of relations” among these goddesses, whose “functions and roles clearly overlap, and they exist in changing and sometimes ambiguous relationships to the gods with whom they are associated.”¹²³ The confusion is magnified when the Egyptian evidence and that of the Hebrew Bible is considered. Oden summarizes:

the venerable pairings of the Canaanite deities is itself impetus for the fusing of the three great goddesses into a single figure. And this obtains not only in the Old Testament, but also, and already, in the texts from Ras Shamra....The conclusion is therefore inevitable that, in the words of Dupont-Sommer, though ʾAšerah, ʾAštart, and ʾAnat are “primitivement distinctes,” yet they are figures “qui ont tendu à se confondre et à s’identifier les unes avec les autres.”¹²⁴

The confusion and identification extends, as already indicated, to the consorts of these goddesses. Iconographically, Astarte is found with Baal,¹²⁵ as is Qudšu,¹²⁶ and also Ishtar.¹²⁷

Sorting out all this complexity is beyond the scope of the present study. Here it is enough to say that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the realm of the goddess—and to be more specific, that of Ishtar and Sekhmet—has as great a probability as Baal-Seth to be the origin of the leonine portrait of Yahweh. Indeed, the probability is greater with regard to the goddesses for the reasons expressed above, namely:

- the continuation (i.e., not absorbed) of other, different male gods with lions in later periods;
- the specific aspects of the lion profiles of Sekhmet and Ishtar, on the one hand, and Yahweh on the other (i.e., largely punitive and martial), coupled with attestation of

¹²² See, e.g., RS 20.24.24 where Astarte is listed as the equivalent of Ishtar (Wyatt, “Astarte,” 110). Note Fulco, “Ishtar,” *ABD* 3:521: other goddesses “were also gradually subsumed into the Inanna-Ishtar complex.” See also Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 339–40; Patrick D. Miller, “Aspects of the Religion of Ugarit,” in idem, *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology*, 77; Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary* (Austin: University of Texas, 1992), 108; T. Abusch, “Ishtar,” *DDD*, 453–54.

¹²³ Miller, “Aspects of the Religion of Ugarit,” 72. Note also William Foxwell Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (5th ed.; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), 74, whom Miller cites on this point. See further Miller, “Aspects of the Religion of Ugarit,” 76–77.

¹²⁴ Oden, *Studies in Lucian's De Syria Dea*, 98, quoting André Dupont-Sommer, “L’inscription de l’amulette d’Arslan Tash,” *RHR* 120 (1939): 133–59, citation from 147.

¹²⁵ See Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baal*, 173–74, 178, 197, 203–204, 208; Pl. 45 no. BM7; Pl. 49 no. BM63.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 155–57; Pl. 41 no. BR 15, Pl. 42 no. BR 16.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 177–79 Pl. 47 no. BM 16: a 14–13th century piece, purchased in Aleppo.

their leonine connections as evidenced in the archaeological record; and

- the identification and association of these goddesses with others in the region.

A still further consideration that makes the goddess connection attractive is that it is often the case that the goddess who has leonine connections is the storm-god's consort. Vanel, for instance, has noted the disappearance of the storm-god's consort at Nuzi and in first-millennium Mesopotamia, that role being played, instead, by Ishtar, who is sometimes represented with Adad.¹²⁸ Or, one might note that in the Egyptian *Contendings of Horus and Seth*, Astarte (along with Anat) is the wife of Seth.¹²⁹ Or, consider the presentation of Atargatis (Hera) with the lions along with Hadad (Zeus) and the bulls in Lucian's *De Dea Syria*. Then, at Ugarit, there are El the bull and his consort Athirat, who may—at least through subsequent deity identifications—have leonine associations;¹³⁰ and Baal, the storm-god, with Astarte.

The calculus of this would be that whereas Yahweh absorbed elements of El and Baal (the latter primarily through storm-god imagery), Yahweh also absorbed leonine aspects—not from El or Baal (though, as indicated above, Baal-Seth remains a possible antecedent), but from their female consorts, the leonine goddesses that were frequently associated with them, with each other, and with other, not originally Canaanite, goddesses—preeminently Ishtar and Sekhmet.

In this light, the portrayal of Yahweh as a kind of lion-god is another instance showing that what originally belonged to the realm of the goddess was incorporated into Yahweh's persona. It is, in short, further evidence for what Othmar Keel has called “cumulative monotheism”¹³¹—the adoption,

¹²⁸ Vanel, *L'iconographie du dieu de l'orage*, 167.

¹²⁹ *ANET*, 14–17; *AEL*, 2:214–23. For Astarte in Egypt, see Stadelmann, *Syrischpalästinensische Gottheiten*, 99–110.

¹³⁰ That is: El (Bull) and Asherah (Lion). According to the reconstruction of Smith (*The Early History of God*, 57 and *passim*), the Asherah cult dies out relatively early in ancient Israel and is subsumed by the Yahweh cult, whereas El is early identified with Yahweh. In the meantime, Baal acquires (or gets attributed) the bull imagery. Yahweh is thus differentiated from the bull because of (still later) anti-Baal polemic but retains the lion imagery (which may have originally been via Asherah?).

¹³¹ Oral communication (see also Othmar Keel, “Yahweh as Mother Goddess,” *Theology Digest* 36 [1989]: 223–36; idem, “Wie männlich ist der Gott Israels?,” *Diakonia* 24 [1993]: 179–86). Keel means by “cumulative monotheism,” a monotheism in marked contrast to Akhenaten's, which was of the reductive sort—eliminating all other gods save the Aten. “Cumulative monotheism” is the exact opposite: a type of amalgamation of many deities and their aspects into one deity. Keel is not the only one to argue such a point. Patrick D. Miller has argued similarly. See his “The Absence of the Goddess in Israelite Religion,” *HAR* 10 (1986): 239–48; and, more recently, idem, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, especially 23–40. Smith, *The Early History of God*, 1–14 and *passim*, speaks of both convergence and differentiation. Robert Karl Gnuse has called the

accumulation, incorporation, and assimilation of aspects of various deities into the one God, Yahweh.¹³² The route to Israelite monotheism did not lie in a reductionistic program like Akhenaten's, but, rather, ran the route of assimilation, amalgamation, perhaps one might even say agglutination.

To connect this directly with the gender discussion of Chapter 1, it should be noted that, if this judgment is correct, it would indicate that the frequently violent image of Yahweh as lion was originally female in origin.¹³³ Warlike goddesses like Ishtar and Sekhmet may well have been the progenitors or promulgators of a leonine tradition that eventually became associated with Yahweh. These goddesses, and others like them, are goddesses of war and the like, but also manifest less violent aspects. Ishtar, for instance, is also a goddess of love;¹³⁴ Sekhmet could heal as well as cause disease.¹³⁵ Such a situation is, again, not unlike—and in fact is well-suited for application to—Yahweh, who also incorporates a number of different aspects, nuances, and characteristics in his persona.¹³⁶ The polarity of these goddesses, that is, is also found in Yahweh, even in leonine Yahweh (see §2.3.4 for a discussion of the “positive” uses of lion imagery with Yahweh in Isa 31:4; Hos 11:10; and Joel 4:16).

The previous arguments notwithstanding, absolute certainty is not to be had on the origins of Yahweh's leonine profile. The complexities surrounding the goddesses involved (especially Astarte, Athirat/Asherah, Anat, and Qudšu) preclude such certainty. Moreover, even as possible contrasts between the Hebrew Bible and the comparative evidence should not be overstressed (see §5.3 above), the value of possible similarities should also not be overestimated for our interpretation. Both are at work along with a third category: transformation.¹³⁷ The most notable transformation in the present discussion

phenomenon “emergent monotheism” (*No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel* [JSOTSup 241; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997]). Cf. also Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 241; and Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (OTL; 2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995–1996), 1:106.

¹³² Smith, *The Early History of God*, 7–8 defines the process, which he calls “convergence” simply as “the coalescence of various deities and/or some of their features into the figure of Yahweh....titles and characteristics originally belonging to various deities secondarily accrued to Yahweh.”

¹³³ The association of various goddesses with violence should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Anat's exploits in *KTU* 1.3 II.3–30.

¹³⁴ It is worth noting that Othmar Keel (*Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994], 155, 158; cf. 39–45) has seen the presence of lion imagery in Song 4:8 as a move to give “the beloved the form and attributes of a goddess” (155), especially Ishtar (158).

¹³⁵ Lurker, *An Illustrated Dictionary*, 106.

¹³⁶ See the treatments in Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, 1–23, 40–44; Smith, *The Early History of God*, *passim*.

¹³⁷ Cf. Roberts, “In Defense of the Monarchy,” 380: “It is difficult to speak of the essence of Yahwism without speaking of its ability to take up elements of its environment, even hostile elements, and transform them into supporting structures for the Yahwistic faith.”

would be that, in contrast to much of the comparative evidence, the Hebrew Bible employs the lion metaphor exclusively with a deity depicted, in the main, in *male* categories. Perhaps at this point Baal-Seth reemerges as an attractive possible origin of the leonine pedigree of Yahweh. To bolster that case further, one might appeal to the syntactical, lexical, and (perhaps) other¹³⁸ connections between the lion image and the theophanic thunderstorm. These serve to tie lion imagery to storm imagery and, consequently, to storm-deities.¹³⁹ Several texts that apparently connect the lion and the storm do so merely by evoking lion imagery by using a term(s) or syntagma belonging to the semantic domain of lion imagery; hence, some passages are clearer than others (cf. Amos 1:2 and Joel 4:16 with Job 37:2, 4) and caution is thus in order. Nevertheless, these connections raise the question of whether the lion is part of the theophanic tradition of the storm. Might there be a theophanic lion tradition or, at the very least, does the lion play a role in the theophanic thunderstorm tradition? Again, Baal-Seth who rides on the lion comes to mind, but a connection between the lion and the storm might also help to explain how the syntagma קִיּוֹל + נָתַן can be used of both storm and lion imagery.¹⁴⁰ If such a connection between the lion and storm exists, it might indicate that the Yahweh-as-lion motif is not, whatever its origins, *exclusively* female, as storm-gods are typically male, especially in the Levant. Even so, while Baal-Seth was associated with both storm and lion, Israel evidently used the lion-Yahweh connection nearly as often as it did that of the storm and Yahweh, and, as shown above, the lion-Yahweh connection has as much to do with the goddess as it does with the storm-god.

But it must be admitted that even if a relationship between the lion-goddesses and Yahweh exists, it lies in the far distant past, if it is recoverable or discernible at all.¹⁴¹ This is to say that the female aspect *per se* is not highly

Smith, *The Early History of God*, would probably subsume this under his differentiation pole. But the fact that transformation is also at work in convergence reveals that it is something of a *tertium quid*.

¹³⁸ See, e.g., Thorkild Jacobsen's argument that the lion's roar is connected with the thunderstorm due to similar sound (*The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976], 128–29). Jacobsen has been followed by Mary Kathleen Brown, "Symbolic Lions: A Study in Ancient Mesopotamian Art and Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1973), *passim*. Note also Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 15, 25, and *passim*.

¹³⁹ For major studies, see Vanel, *L'iconographie du dieu de l'orage*; Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens*; and Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*.

¹⁴⁰ Or is the connection between the storm (thunder) and the lion (roar) purely onomatopoeic?

¹⁴¹ Cf. the related discussion of Smith, *The Early History of God*, 147: "Female language for Yahweh could have stemmed from the flexibility of divine language. In those cases where the literary use of imagery specific to the asherah seems to function as the background for biblical divine language, as in Proverbs 3:13–18, the goddess, or at least her symbol, apparently made an impact, just as the gods El and Baal affected the shape of some male portrayals of Yahweh. Indeed, since the impact of the imagery of the asherah

pronounced in presentations of Yahweh as a lion. Even so, we might note that in Hos 13:8 the parallel to the lion image is “like a bear bereaved of cubs.” As stated earlier in this work, the latter image is certainly one for a mother bear.¹⁴² Interestingly, the particular lion term employed in this passage is לביא. Many have argued that the לביא is a feminine term: “lioness.” While this latter judgment is philologically dubious,¹⁴³ the parallelism at work in this particular passage may nevertheless provide some evidence that the connection of the lion with female aspects incorporated into Yahweh worship is occasionally present at some level in certain texts, even if that connection and those aspects are no longer readily apparent.¹⁴⁴ Again, it is unfortunately the case that certainty is not to be had.

To summarize: if Yahweh’s leonine profile is not original to Israel (i.e., *sui generis*) and is, in fact, derived from other deity profiles, the options are mainly two: Baal-Seth or the lion-goddess, especially the martial lion-goddess—better *goddesses*—preeminently Ishtar and Sekhmet. The archeological evidence as well as the textual presentations of the leonine Yahweh would seem to favor the latter possibility. If so, Yahweh’s leonine side may well have been an absorption of what was once associated with the goddess. One cannot be certain given the complexities surrounding the goddesses who are associated with the lion and the enduring connections of the lion with the male god.¹⁴⁵ To put it simply: tracing the genetic origins of deity-types or aspects is notoriously difficult given the complexities inherent in the task and in the entities themselves.¹⁴⁶ Yet, even if the leonine characteristics of Yahweh lay originally in the realm of the goddess, the fact that the Hebrew Bible

can be detected in some instances, it may be argued that its effects were more widespread than can be perceived at present.”

¹⁴² See BDB 1013–14; *HALOT* 4:1489.

¹⁴³ See Appendix 1.

¹⁴⁴ Note further the discussion of Ps 111:5 in Chapter 2 (§§2.3.1, 2.3.4). This verse may evoke Yahweh as the lioness providing for her cubs. However, the fact that the only developed lion-metaphor applied to a female entity (the lioness of Ezekiel 19) is largely negative might warrant caution in overestimating positive female connotations in the lion image when applied to Yahweh. Moreover, one must recall the zoological fact that male lions also hunt—a fact apparently also known in ancient Israel, if a text like Nah 2:12–14 is any indication.

¹⁴⁵ But note again that, in many cases, the male god is typically a lion-killer or lion-controller (e.g., **figs. 4.216–220**) or uses the lion as a mount (**fig. 4.221**). Neither aspect is especially pronounced with reference to Yahweh. Note also (again) that many female deities’ associations with the lion lie mostly in the realm of fertility (e.g., **fig. 4.222**), another aspect that does not correspond to Yahweh’s leonine profile.

¹⁴⁶ Cf., e.g., Green’s remarks on the storm-god: “The concept of the Storm-god...represented both a fusion between the storm and the fertility concepts and the synthesis of a variety of divine aspects. Conceptually, in the evolutionary process of various groups, this deity gradually evolved in the mythical realm as the presider over a pantheon of gods and within cultic and historical settings as the fearless warrior, the provider of sustenance for society, and the preserver of life” (*The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 2; cf. 15).

applies lion imagery so extensively to Yahweh, a God mainly figured in male categories, has a certain rhetorical impact, which must be addressed below.

5.4.2. *Yahweh and the Lion-Kings*

Before turning to that impact proper, it must be admitted that there is another possible source for the leonine presentation of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible. That source is the venerable ancient Near Eastern tradition of lion-kings (see §5.3 above; further §4.3). In textual sources, they, too, are portrayed as lions and with violent and martial aspects akin to what one finds with Yahweh.

While it is true that numerous monarchs are represented as lions in aspects and contexts that are very similar to that found in literary presentations of Yahweh as a lion in the Hebrew Bible, it is rare to find iconographical presentations of such (but cf., perhaps, **figs. 3.12, 4.56-58, 4.60-63, 4.84, 4.169-172**, etc.). Perhaps the clearest royal-lion representations are the sphinxes (e.g., **figs. 4.156-158**) but these frequently played apotropaic roles—roles which, to be sure, are not to be entirely divorced from threatening presentations but which, at the same time, are not coterminous with such. Closer parallels to the presentations of Yahweh as the divine lion are clearly found in the royal inscriptions of various monarchs where lion metaphor is often used in the descriptions of the monarch's prowess in battle.

Despite the fact that this type of language occurs early and often, there are two main repositories that commend themselves as possible antecedents to the usage found in the Hebrew Bible. The raging royal lion metaphors are found with special concentration among the Ramessides of Dynasties 19–20 (see §4.3.2.1) in Egypt and among various rulers in the Neo-Assyrian empire—from at least the time of Adad-narari II through Esarhaddon (see §4.3.2.2). Both locales attest examples of the lion attacking humans—and in Egypt this tradition is quite widespread—but it is worth noting the heavy concentration of this motif in Mesopotamia during the Neo-Assyrian period (see §4.2.2).

The fact that there are at least these two data sets warrants caution in deciding too quickly which is the most likely to have exercised influence on the Hebrew Bible. One must proceed carefully: if royal lion metaphors are the progenitor of the divine lion Yahweh, it is not yet clear that those metaphors are *exclusively* Neo-Assyrian. The existence of the motif elsewhere, and earlier, and especially in New Kingdom Egypt, might well indicate that this is an old tradition that is functioning instead of, or at least in addition to, possible Neo-Assyrian influence. And, of course, the opposite could be said as well. Even so, it is worth noting that many of the texts that employ the militant and punitive lion metaphor for Yahweh are prophetic and belong (whatever the vagaries of their final redactions) to the late Neo-Assyrian or early Babylonian periods (e.g., Hos 5:14; 11:10; 13:7–8; Amos 1:2; 3:8; Isa 31:4; 38:13; Jer 25:30, 38; 49:19; 50:44; see further §2.3.4). This might well indicate that, at least in these cases, external influence—if it is present—is most likely Neo-Assyrian in origin.

Further data might be culled in support of a Neo-Assyrian connection. For example, those few texts where Yahweh seems to be figured as a lion-hunter, pursuing the wicked king-as-lion (e.g., Ezek 12:13; 17:20; see §5.4 above) might be profitably compared with the royal lion-hunt traditions (§4.3.1). Again, the Neo-Assyrian exemplars, given their power and familiarity, come immediately to mind. And yet, as the present work has had occasion to show, the lion-hunt is ubiquitous; the same cannot be said of the (possible) presentations of Yahweh as a lion-hunter and therefore tracing possible influence on this particular point is much more difficult. Moreover, it is also the case that several deities in the ancient Near East were portrayed as lion-hunters or killers, and were so presented in periods other than just the Assyrian. Here too, arguing for an *exclusively royal* referent, more broadly, or an *exclusively Assyrian* origin, more narrowly, is problematic. Even so, the particular nexus of at least some of the prophetic imagery and within the Neo-Assyrian period makes it at least possible that traditions surrounding the human king and the lion might well have been one of the factors impacting the presentation of the divine lion-king Yahweh.¹⁴⁷

Again, regardless of the exact origin of the motif—whether from the realm of the gods (especially the goddess) as in a history of religion analysis, or from human monarchs, as in a more socio-politically oriented investigation—the application of negative, destructive leonine aspects to Yahweh has significant rhetorical impact. In particular, the biblical application of this type of imagery to Yahweh while at the same time the avoidance of similar application with reference to Israelite monarchs actually serves to bolster the image of Yahweh *as king*. Again, the Hebrew Bible shows no such reticence in using lion imagery of foreign kings (e.g., Ezek 32:2–3; Jer 50:17; 51:34; cf. Dan 7:4; see §2.3.3). This has obvious bearing upon the possibly polemical avoidance of lion imagery with reference to Israelite monarchs (see

¹⁴⁷ For the notion of human kingship impacting presentations of divine kingship, see Smith, *The Early History of God*, 106; Brettler, *God is King*, 15: “The earthly reality preceded and served as the basis for speculation about the divine. Thus in cases where common imagery is shared by God and the king, I assume that human imagery has been projected upon God rather than vice versa.” Brettler and others have focused mostly on the Israelite kingship; it is obvious that notions of ancient Near Eastern kingship in various regional manifestations may also have affected presentations of Yahweh’s divine kingship, at least at certain junctures. Note *ibid.*, 167: “it would be important to know to what extent God as king is patterned after an overlord rather than after the native Israelite king.” The lion is patently one of these cases. For two studies that discuss the influence of Assyrian royal ideology (at least obliquely) on the presentation of Yahweh, see Paul-Eugène Dion, “Quelques aspects de l’interaction entre religion et politique dans le Deutéronome,” *Science et Esprit* 30 (1978): 39–55; and Eckart Otto, “Die besiegten Sieger: Von der Macht und Ohnmacht der Ideen in der Geschichte am Beispiel der neuassyrischen Großreichspolitik,” *BZ* 43 (1999): 180–203. Gary V. Smith, “The Concept of God/the Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible,” *TJ* 3 (1982): 18–38, is a rich repository of royal language applied to various deities but does little with the connection of such to specific political dynasties.

§5.3.1 above) but also—given the widespread use of leonine metaphor in ancient Near Eastern royal ideology—provides a sort of royal filter through which the divine lion, Yahweh, can be seen.

The image of the king is, of course, a masculine one, and its presence at some level in leonine metaphorical presentations of Yahweh thus reinforces notions of Yahweh's kingship and, thus, his maleness. In this light, the use of the lion image, whatever its possible connections to the sphere of the goddess, may, ironically—at least by the time of the composition of the texts of the Hebrew Bible—be an image that actually serves to reinforce Yahweh's masculine and monarchic aspects.¹⁴⁸ And, depending on the provenance of the specific text in question, the male and royal aspects may combine to make Yahweh look distinctively like a *Neo-Assyrian* king.

To summarize: the leonine presentations of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible have two possible and plausible sources of origin. One is the realm of the gods, treated extensively above (§5.4.1); the other possible origin is ancient Near Eastern royal ideology. Royal inscriptions celebrating the victory of the king in battle often include leonine descriptions of the monarch in question that are similar in articulation and context to those of Yahweh as lion. In light of what has been said above, it is probably not possible to decide definitively that only one of these origins is actual and the other irrelevant. Instead, given the extensive use of the lion within both realms with various referents, it is quite likely that at different points one of the realms had more impact than the other but that, at times at least, both exercised influence concurrently on leonine imagery and metaphor in the Hebrew Bible.

Such a conclusion does not obviate the importance of the diachronic and genetic endeavor so much as help to underscore the interactionist nature of metaphor, especially when it is applied to a complex subject such as the divine (see §1.2). So, instead of choosing between the royal and divine realms, it might be more useful, ultimately, to recognize that *both* are at work (though again perhaps not equally so in every instance). Such a combination idea—monarch and deity, deity and monarch—functions in a number of ways according to an interactionist understanding of metaphor theory. It would, on the one hand, make the kings look a good bit more divine since they would share with the gods the application of leonine metaphor; it would also, at the same time, make the gods (and in this case, Israel's God Yahweh), look more kingly (see above). Both subjects, deities and monarchs, also begin to look more leonine given their comparison with these creatures; and, finally, given the interaction of metaphorical elements, the lion looks simultaneously more royal ("king of the beasts" after all!) and more divine—a point to which I will return in Chapter 6 (see §6.4).

¹⁴⁸ Here it is instructive to recall the decrease of female deities associated with the lion as one proceeds through the Late Bronze and Iron Age materials in ancient Israel/Palestine. See above and, further, Chapter 3.

5.4.3. “Mischmetaphors”: Gods, Kings, Lions, and Other Animals

The combination at work in the lion metaphor need not be restricted only to the divine and royal realms, however. In many instances where lion metaphors are used of Yahweh, other animal metaphors are also employed in the immediate context. Hos 13:7–8, mentioned above, is an excellent example. Passages such as these—and they are also found in metaphorical presentations of gods and monarchs in the ancient Near East¹⁴⁹—with their combination of several different animals in one complex metaphorical presentation might be termed “Mischmetaphors,” on analogy with the *Mischwesen* found in the comparative material.¹⁵⁰ Perhaps these *Mischwesen* take on increased significance in the light of these “Mischmetaphors.”¹⁵¹ Be that as it may, the combination of different animal images in close proximity and/or in one complex metaphorical presentation leads to two major observations:

- 1) The “Mischmetaphors” may well indicate that the association of the lion with Yahweh cannot be understood as exclusively male or exclusively female in orientation. In these complex metaphors we may have to do instead with a *literary technique* that is part and parcel of the mixed-animal-metaphor speech for gods (and monarchs) found throughout Egypt and Mesopotamia.
- 2) The “Mischmetaphors” also send a *theological message* regardless of their literary origins. The combination of multiple animals in close proximity with one referent, Yahweh, means that God is not to be overly associated with any one theriomorphic image. One metaphor alone by itself—even when that metaphor is leonine—cannot, in the words of Brueggemann, get this God said right.¹⁵² The elusive nature of Yahweh is, in fact, what leads to the use of metaphorical language—animal and otherwise—in the first place.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ See §4.3.2, especially §4.3.2.1.

¹⁵⁰ Perhaps complex- or combined-metaphors is a more accurate term. I employ “Mischmetaphor” with the same connotation and to keep this notion distinct from what is known as “mixed metaphor.” Despite the infelicitous nature of mixed metaphor in English parlance, it is often at work in the metaphors of the Hebrew Bible.

¹⁵¹ Although the provenance of the seal of *yhyhw* (?) (fig. 3.85) is unknown, it might be taken as evidence that the motif of the bull- or lion-men (*aladlammū/lamassu*) was known in the west. Note also Mordechai Cogan, “A Lamashtu Plaque from the Judean Shephelah,” *IEJ* 45 (1995): 155–61.

¹⁵² See Walter Brueggemann, “Preaching a Sub-Version,” *TT* 55 (1998): 198–99.

¹⁵³ Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 632–33, argues that the rapid switching of metaphors is one way by which the authors made explicit the metaphorical nature of their descriptions of God. For further discussion of whether or not ancient writers knew they were speaking metaphorically, see *ibid.*, 82, 85–87, 620–21, 631.

Dennis T. Olson, writing on Deuteronomy 32, has made both of these points quite well:

Images for Yahweh...move fluidly between male and female metaphors. Such fluidity in the use of male and female imagery was typical of ancient Near Eastern depictions of deity, even when a given Near Eastern god was understood as distinctly male or female. The uniqueness of Yahweh is that Yahweh is neither male nor female.... Yet male and female metaphors are used because they illuminate particular characteristics of God. The interchange of such gender-specific metaphors, however, suggests that no one image captures or exhausts the understanding of God.¹⁵⁴

A third observation also seems to be in order: the “Mischmetaphorizing” creates *an image of overwhelming power and numinousness*.¹⁵⁵ No one image or metaphor will capture the deity and that is only partly due to the failure of language or the limits of metaphor. The other part is due to the raw power and sheer divinity of the deity.¹⁵⁶ Language, even metaphorical language, struggles to speak about such entities. One recourse is to multiply metaphors, even and especially in close proximity.

However they are combined, it is important to stress that, in the main, the lion-Yahweh metaphors—whatever their possible origins, similarities, differences, dependencies, and so forth—are negative and threatening in tenor. The lion that is Yahweh hunts, captures prey, rips it apart and devours it; when that lion roars, it strikes fear into all who hear it. In Chapter 2 (§2.3.4), I argued that even the possible exceptions to this rule (Isa 31:4; Hos 11:10; Joel 4:16) depend on this tenor of threat and power that the lion metaphor evokes in order to achieve their (possibly) positive reversal of expectations. In this light, these passages are not exceptional but, in fact, exemplary. At the same time, however, there can be little doubt that these texts (especially Hos 11:10) do employ the lion metaphor in ways that are not typical of the Hebrew Bible or

¹⁵⁴ Dennis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 141. Olson references Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 206. See further Smith, *The Early History of God*, 139–40, and his conclusions on 147: “Near Eastern examples invoking various gods in female and male language demonstrate how pliable language for a god or goddess could be, incorporating even language of the opposite sex.” Similarly, “Israelite society perceived Yahweh primarily as a [male] god, although Yahweh was viewed also as embodying traits or values expressed by various gendered metaphors and as transcending such particular renderings” (ibid.).

¹⁵⁵ The frequent portrayal of Egyptian deities as composites—especially as human bodies with animal heads—comes immediately to mind.

¹⁵⁶ Emily Teeter (“Animals in Egyptian Literature,” in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* [ed. Billie Jean Collins; HdO I 64; Leiden: Brill, 2002], 267) has argued the same holds true for “Mischmetaphorizing” of kings in Egyptian royal inscriptions: “The Ramesside texts reflect that the king could simultaneously be compared to a variety of powerful animals and that the metaphors were heavily mixed in the effort to stress the superhuman power of the king” (emphasis mine).

the broader ancient Near East.¹⁵⁷ These texts take on increased significance, therefore, insofar as they develop and use the lion image in new, unexpected, and startling ways, even while they do so in a way that depends and builds upon the long-standing traditions of lion imagery in the ancient Near East. Part of that newness is, of course, due to the process of metaphorizing in the first place (see Chapter 1). That being granted, it must nevertheless be stressed that previous scholarship which has often spoken of the lion metaphor as ambiguous at some level is largely mistaken. The image itself is *not* ambiguous. In the main, it retains its threatening tenor rather *unambiguously*, but, given the mechanics of metaphor and the flexibility of the lion image itself, it can be differently focused and ambivalently employed.

5.5. “SAVE ME FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LION!”: THE ENEMY AS LION

The typically threatening connotations of leonine metaphors—whether used of Yahweh or otherwise—helps to explain their use with the third primary referent of lion metaphors in the Hebrew Bible that deserves attention in light of the comparative evidence. That referent is the enemy (or enemies) who are frequently described as lions—especially in the Psalms (e.g., Pss 7:3; 10:8–9; 17:12; 22:14, 17[?], 22; 34:11; 35:17; 57:5; 58:7; 74:4; 124:6; cf. 71:11 and 94:13).¹⁵⁸ It must immediately be stated that a large number of animal images are applied to the enemy in the Psalms, often in close proximity to the lion imagery. Indeed, at times it seems that the metaphor(s) used for enemies switches indiscriminately and unpredictably from one verse to the next. Psalm 22 is an excellent example. Here, then, is another example of “Mischmetaphor,” not unlike that encountered with Yahweh (see §5.4.3

¹⁵⁷ Exceptions to this judgment would include the guardian lions but these are not always distinctively representative of or metaphorical for deities. A clearer exception is the lion orthostat of the goddess Allât at Palmyra where it does seem clear that the lion represents the goddess and that the iconography of the piece—clarified by its accompanying inscription—is protective. See Chapter 4 (§4.5.1) and Han J. W. Drijvers, “Sanctuaries and Social Safety: The Iconography of Divine Peace in Hellenistic Syria,” in *Commemorative Figures: Papers Presented to Dr. Th. P. van Baaren on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday, May 13, 1982* (Visible Religion: Annual for Religious Iconography 1; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 65–75.

¹⁵⁸ The motif appears elsewhere as well, as, e.g., in Job 4:10–11; 18:4; 29:17. Cf. also those passages that portray wicked rulers—enemies of a sort—as lions (e.g., Prov 28:15; Zech 11:16) or instances where the same holds true for other nations and their monarchs (e.g., Isa 5:29–30; Jer 2:15; 4:7; 50:17; 51:38; Ezek 32:2–3; Joel 1:6; Nah 2:12–3:1; etc.). Note also the existence of passages that describe Israel, Judah, or Jerusalem as metaphorical lions in a way that highlights their wickedness (e.g., Jer 12:8; Ezek 22:25; cf. Zeph 3:3). Finally, connections in the broader narrative contexts of certain leonine metaphors might also be pertinent. E.g., if one works out the parallelism of David’s speech to Saul in the Goliath story, the lion is likened to “this uncircumcised Philistine” (1 Sam 17:36; cf. further 17:34–37)!

above). Insofar as that is true, many of the conclusions suggested above also apply here. That being said, the comparative material casts still further light on the use of lions in enemy-speech.¹⁵⁹

First, when the lion metaphor stands for a human entity, it is significant to point out that the clear preference of the Hebrew Bible is to associate the image with a human *enemy*.¹⁶⁰ This is significant for it would appear that—although the comparative material also knows of the wicked- or enemy-as-lion (see §4.2.4)—the Hebrew Bible (especially the Psalter) uses this sort of lion metaphor more extensively, consistently, and personally than does the broader Near Eastern context.¹⁶¹

Second, the long-standing traditions of associating the lion with monarchs and deities throughout the ancient Near East and, to a lesser extent, in the Hebrew Bible itself—coupled with the “Mischmetaphorizing” that is often found in enemy-speech (again, especially in the Psalms)—causes one to wonder if something more sinister is at work in the lion image when it is applied to a person’s human foe. To put it differently, given the data on lion metaphors in the ancient Near East, could the application of the lion image in metaphorical descriptions of the adversary constitute an example of the rhetorical demonization of the enemy on a grand scale? Lion metaphors in the ancient Near East, as well as in the Hebrew Bible, after all, are usually applied to super-powerful beings (namely, monarchs and deities), and it has been repeatedly demonstrated in this work that such use is an ancient and widespread tradition. When the psalmists describe their personal enemies as lions, therefore, they are employing a metaphor of power and dominance often and long reserved for gods and kings. Is such an ascription—especially given the reservation of the metaphor in certain contexts—knowing and purposeful? If so, the extensive use of leonine metaphor for enemies in the Hebrew Bible would function on at least three levels:

¹⁵⁹ Cf., more generally, Edmund Leach, “Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse,” in *New Directions in the Study of Language* (ed. Eric H. Lenneberg; Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1964), 23–63. While Leach is largely concerned with animal names that are connected with obscenities, he does highlight the supernatural nature that these animals frequently assume. He also notes that the farther the animal is perceived to be from the self, the wilder it is thought to be, and that this has bearing on its use in language. This is of some interest with regard to אַרִי vs. אֲרִיָּה in the Hebrew Bible. See Appendix 1.

¹⁶⁰ This is true even when the lion image refers to a king, because most king-lion metaphors are negative. See §5.3.1 above and Chapter 2 (especially §2.3.3; cf. also §2.3.2).

¹⁶¹ Within the Psalter—at least within the psalms of lament—the lion metaphor is used far more often of enemies than other comparable animal metaphors (see Othmar Keel, *Feinde und Gottesleugner: Studien zum Image der Widersacher in den Individualpsalmen* [SBM 7; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969], 201). Hence, at the very least one could say that the Psalter—as a literary work—attests a higher concentration of leonine enemy metaphors than comparable literature in the ancient Near East.

- 1) the *rhetoric* of the metaphor itself—namely, that the enemy is a large, powerful, carnivorous predator;¹⁶²
- 2) the *tradition* of the metaphor—namely, that the lion is a symbol for king and god (i.e., super-powerful); and
- 3) the *functioning* of the metaphor—namely, the switching (“Mischmetaphorizing”) common for the other super-powerful referents of leonine metaphor (gods and monarchs).

While one must be careful not to overstate the case, it is nevertheless critical to recall that other animals and, more to the point, other carnivores were known in ancient Israel/Palestine. And, while other animals *are* used to describe the enemies in the Psalms, the lion is among the favorite terms—*the* favorite in the lament psalms—when animal images are employed.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the lion has a long history as an image of threat and thus for the enemy, foe, or wicked—even if not with the same frequency and tenor as that encountered in the Psalms. But even that old tradition is also not completely separate from connections with the deity and the monarch. So, in my judgment, there is justification in positing that the application of imagery used so extensively and positively for the two most powerful figures in the ancient world (monarch and deity) to one’s own, personal enemies is a rhetorical attempt to demonize them in a way that should not be underestimated. If this is correct, the demonization would be two-fold:

- 1) not only is the enemy a large predator ready to rip, tear, and devour the psalmist—that is, this enemy is *not*-human; but
- 2) the enemy is also imbued with a type of *super*-, perhaps even *supra*-, human power insofar as an animal image that is frequently used (and often reserved) for the most powerful of beings is now applied to one’s own enemy.

The lion image would thus doubly signify the absolute power of the enemy.¹⁶³ The attacked individual is absolutely helpless in the face of such danger—real,

¹⁶² Note that Domain 3: Hunting in Appendix 2 is by far the largest of the semantic domains relating to the lion. Predation is thus *the* key image.

¹⁶³ The superhuman/mythological nature of the enemies is a theme that is often raised in the literature. See, e.g., Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Commentary* (CC; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 95–99; idem, *Theology of the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 125–36; and Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of the Psalmists* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 45, 107. While not explicitly mentioning the lion in this regard, Kraus does note that motifs and metaphors from the domain of kingship found their way into non-royal psalms (*Psalms 1–59*, 96–97). This, along with other factors, may be seen as support for a scholar such as Keel, who has argued that the images for the enemies in the prayer songs are projections, objectified by the oppressed in their language and

metaphorical, and otherwise.¹⁶⁴ All they can do is pray “Save me from the mouth of the lion!” (הושיעני מפי אריה; Ps 22:22a; cf. Pss 35:17; 58:7). What, after all, is stronger than a lion?

But there is one who *can* save from the lion, and who, though also figured as a lion, *is* stronger than a lion. This one is, of course, the Divine Lion Yahweh who can deliver from the lion, stop up its mouth, save his servants from its maw, and the like (Pss 22:22b; 124:6; 1 Sam 17:37;¹⁶⁵ Daniel 6).¹⁶⁶ Yet this Divine Lion is also one who, despite all that, must not be taken for granted, nor treated too lightly. The lion that is Yahweh can, just as easily, turn *against* Israel. This double-edged nature of the lion image in the Hebrew Bible must not be underestimated. Yahweh can deliver from the lion but there is, in turn, no deliverance from the Divine Lion. No wonder Israel follows after his roar only with fear and trembling (Hos 11:10).

5.6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the exclamation of Ezek 19:2 is quite appropriate: “What a lioness was your mother!” The image of the “Israelite lion” truly is something to behold, worthy to receive such acclaim—if it is understood positively. Moreover, the Israelite lion really did lie down among other lions—the lions of Mesopotamia, Hatti, Egypt, the Levant, and other locales throughout the

metaphor (*Feinde und Gottesleugner*, 202, speaks of “Dämonisierung”; 209–11 of the “Subjektivierung und Radikalisierung der Feindesvorstellungen”). See also Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 97; and Norbert Lohfink, *Great Themes from the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), 155–66. Kraus himself states that while the enemy is indubitably a real person, the “enemy image that resembles the human being is regularly transcendentalized” presenting a picture of “the utmost degree of godlessness and violent evil” (*Psalms 1–59*, 98; cf. *Theology of the Psalms*, 125–26, 133–34). Finally, Ronald E. Clements has observed that scholarship on the enemies has often tied their presentation to national foes or enemies of the king (*A Century of Old Testament Study* [rev. ed.; Guildford: Lutterworth, 1983], 115). Regardless of the exact merits of this latter argument, such a situation—if it were to be established—could be easily connected to the broader ancient Near Eastern contexts of the lion image.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Keel, *Feinde und Gottesleugner*, 211: “Die Figuren eines Märchen oder eines Mythos sind in der Regel gut oder schlecht und nicht vieldeutig wie Menschen aus Fleisch und Blut.” In the case of lion-metaphors of enemies in the psalms, however, the case might be made that these individuals are *much more* than flesh and blood. Or, if they do have blood, then it is royal; and if they do have flesh, it must be divine.

¹⁶⁵ Despite his earlier boast that he was the one who would deliver (נצל) from the lion or bear (1 Sam 17:35), David claims here that it is Yahweh who delivered (נצל) him from those entities. Some (e.g., van der Kooij, “The Story of David and Goliath,” 129; cf. Dietrich, “Die Erzählungen von David und Goliath,” 171–91) have argued that v. 37 belongs to a secondary redaction.

¹⁶⁶ Note John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermenia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 273 and n. 91 who draws attention to the fact that the traditional prayer for the dead asks God to free the soul of the deceased “as you freed Daniel from the lions’ den” (*Sicut liberasti Danielem de lacu leonum*).

ancient Near East. Together, these lions comprise a magnificent lot. They are, indubitably, of one species, yet not without sub-speciation. Their similarities are immediately recognizable. But their coats are not all of one color, the length of the mane differs, as does their size and weight. They are all beautiful animals, the Israelite lion no less than the others. But it is in the comparison that the common and the distinct—both beautiful and worthy of attention—comes to clarity.

Chapter 6

Conclusion(s): God, Language, and Lions, Again

“Metaphor is....irreplaceable: metaphor allows us to understand our selves and our world in ways that no other modes of thought can.”¹

“They [religious metaphors] form a bridge between direct and mediate experience, between the religious founders and leaders and their followers; and they furnish a common bond of understanding between worshipers, and are the means by which religious content and forms are handed down from one generation to the next. In the metaphors, therefore, all that is shared by the worshipers of an individual culture or cultural period in their common response to the Numinous is summed and crystallized, and in the summation what is specific and characteristic in the response will stand out. For in its choice of central metaphor a culture or cultural period necessarily reveals more clearly than anywhere else what it considers essential in the numinous experience and wants to recapture and transmit, the primary meaning on which it builds, which underlies and determines the total character of its response, the total character of its religion.”²

“The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God.”³

6.1. INTRODUCTION

While every effort has been made to be comprehensive in this study, it remains possible that a passage or two that evokes lion imagery in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Appendix 2), especially in a metaphorical way, has been overlooked. There can be no doubt whatsoever that, given the ubiquity of the lion image throughout the ancient Near East, the rich resources found therein pertaining to this subject have not been exhausted. Indeed, a statement made earlier bears repeating here: To undertake a comprehensive analysis of the lion in ancient Near Eastern iconography and literature would be the subject of a massive monograph—or, better, series of monographs.⁴ In fact, a number of studies

¹ George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), xi.

² Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 3-4.

³ William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), xviii; Pl. 8.

⁴ Cf. Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (13 vols.; New York: Pantheon Books, 1953-1968), 7:37.

have already appeared,⁵ and it is hoped that this study can be added to the indispensable works of Brown, de Wit, Kaplan, Schweitzer, and others so as to provide a broad and solid foundation for further studies of the lion in the Hebrew Bible, ancient Israel, and the ancient Near East. And yet, regardless of this volume's possible contribution to subsequent discussions, the material that has been presented here is more than enough to draw several conclusions and implications for assessing the lion as image and metaphor in the various contexts discussed. Although a large part of this task was carried out in Chapter 5, it remains here to summarize the work, to draw some further implications that emerge from it, and to offer some closing remarks.

6.2. SUMMARY

Chapter 1 began with the question of appropriate language for God. It was observed there that biblical language for God is rich and varied. Numerous metaphors are used when speaking of God and these run the gamut from anthropomorphic images to ones derived from the natural and animal worlds. The first chapter suggested that these latter metaphors might provide a way beyond the impasse faced in many contemporary theological discussions on God-language insofar as physiomorphic and zoomorphic metaphors are not primarily anthropocentric and, as a consequence, are able to avoid some of the problems inherent in anthropomorphic metaphors; naturalistic and theriomorphic metaphors also contain nuances not readily available to anthropomorphic ones. After briefly surveying recent developments in metaphor theory, the most important of which is that metaphors work in an interactive way, the chapter focused on one particular type of metaphor, animal imagery, and one particular exemplar of such, lion imagery.

Chapter 2 then provided an overview of the many passages (over two hundred) in the Hebrew Bible that mention or evoke lion imagery and metaphor (see also Appendices 2-3). Despite the initial interest in language for God, Chapter 2 showed that the lion image is highly developed and more extensively employed in the Hebrew Bible than a study limited to explicit references to Yahweh and the lion might imply. Indeed, in the biblical material, a typology of sorts can be identified, which includes passages that treat the lion in naturalistic ways as well as passages that use the lion in metaphorical constructions. The latter can be further subdivided; it became apparent that lion

⁵ See especially Mary Kathleen Brown, "Symbolic Lions: A Study in Ancient Mesopotamian Art and Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1973); Michael Matthew Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible: A Study of a Biblical Metaphor" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981); Constant de Wit, *Le rôle et le sens du lion dans L'Égypte ancienne* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951; 2d ed. = ed. Gaber Aly Hussein, Luxor: Gezirat el Bairat, 1980[?]); and Ursula Schweitzer, *Löwe und Sphinx im alten Ägypten* (ÄF 15; ed. Alexander Scharff; Glückstadt und Hamburg: J. J. Augustin Verlag, 1948). Note also the works in progress or recently published that are mentioned in the Preface of this work.

metaphors in the Hebrew Bible revolve around four primary referents: the self/righteous, the enemy/wicked, the monarch/mighty one, and the deity. Each of these was discussed in turn.

As it can be doubted that the Hebrew Bible is an accurate record of ancient Israelite religion—that is, whether it is entirely reflective of the religion of ancient Israelites at a given point in their history—Chapter 3 presented a survey of the lion in epigraphic, archaeological, and artifactual remains from ancient Israel/Palestine from the Late Bronze Age through the Persian Period (1500-332). A large number of pieces were examined and placed in their chronological periods. Additionally, several unprovenanced seals and the onomastic evidence were explored. Throughout all this material, several tendencies were noted, the most important of which include the following:

- 1) The lion is often associated with the monarch/mighty one and with deity/deities (both male and female, though the latter declines in frequency as one proceeds chronologically through the material);
- 2) lion artifacts are frequently found in cultic and official contexts (reinforcing the first observation); and
- 3) these artifacts typically bear evidence of artistic connection to other regions and their respective artistic traditions, be they northern or southern in origin.

Chapter 4 offered an extensive survey of lion imagery and metaphor across the art and literature of the ancient Near East. This chapter was organized according to rubric and function, categorizing the attested imagery according to whether it utilized the lion as a negative image for the enemy, threat to order, or wicked; as a positive image for the monarch/mighty one or victor; or as an image for the gods and/or goddesses. The extensive use of the lion as a guardian of portals and gateways was also considered. To be sure, the lion was occasionally employed as both image and metaphor in the ancient Near Eastern materials in ways that lie outside these four primary categories, but these four rubrics were certainly the dominant ones and proved helpful in cataloguing the vast amount of material found in the comparative contexts. Consonant with what was seen in Chapter 2, Chapter 4 argued that whatever the exact use of the lion image, it was apparent that its function as well as its main tenor in metaphorical presentations were primarily dependent on the power and the potential threat the animal represented.

Finally, Chapter 5 drew the data from Chapter 4 into dialogue with that from Chapters 2-3 in order to shed light on the specific ways in which the lion image is employed in the Hebrew Bible. Marked similarities and differences were drawn between these various bodies of evidence—in particular, with regard to the way the biblical material uses the lion metaphorically with

reference to the monarch/mighty one, Yahweh, and the enemy. It was argued that:

- 1) The use of the lion as a *trope of threat and power* is relatively stable—and in some cases, is almost identical—in and among the various bodies of data examined.
- 2) The use of the lion with the *monarch/mighty one* in the biblical texts was quite different from the comparative and archaeological data, possibly due to the nature of the texts themselves, but also—and more importantly—the ideology and theology of kingship in ancient Israel as expressed in those selfsame texts.
- 3) The use of the lion with *Yahweh* was largely similar to the comparative evidence, the most notable difference being that, in the Hebrew Bible, there is no female lion deity. Given this situation, it was posited that:
 - a. the leonine element in Yahweh's presentation might derive from the storm-god composite Baal-Seth. Alternatively, and probably more likely, it represents an aspect that originally belonged to the realm of the goddess and that was incorporated into Yahweh's persona from that realm, perhaps via the goddesses Sekhmet and/or Ishtar (and/or her several Levantine equivalents); and yet
 - b. the use of militant lion metaphors in ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions would indicate that they, too, remain a possible and at times quite likely repository from which Yahweh's leonine profile may have derived; and
 - c. the frequent and close combination of lion metaphors with other metaphors in descriptions of the divine represents an attempt to both figure the deity and indicate that the deity is ultimately unfigurable.
- 4) Finally, the use of the lion as an image for the *enemy* is similar to the ancient Near Eastern data and yet more pronounced in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Psalms; its specific use there may be a rhetorical device to demonize one's enemies at an exponentially higher level than normal enemy speech or other animal metaphors.

These, in brief, are only the more important conclusions that have been drawn in the course of this study. Given the nature of the evidence at our

disposal, some must remain more tentative than others; certainly other conclusions could also be added to the list. Such is the case with the lion: as an image it is both pervasive and flexible enough to provide fertile ground for research—past, present, and future. This study must content itself with these conclusions and, on the basis of them and the research presented throughout, conclude with a few of the implications that they suggest.

6.3. IMPLICATIONS

A first implication that can be mentioned concerns research into animal imagery. The methodology set out in Chapter 1 has been fruitful. An in-depth analysis of one image has been instructive; and the specific image chosen has been useful for such an investigation. Moreover, the specific methodology employed—one that pays equal attention to both text and iconography—has been shown to be not merely illustrative, but also highly informative. In my judgment, similar methodology applied to other animal images will yield significant and productive results.

But, to return to an issue raised in Chapter 1, which of the two—text or iconography—is *more* helpful in such a methodology? The data presented here shows rather clearly that *both* repositories are helpful, perhaps even equally so. It cannot be said that one is vastly superior to the other, but at the same time it should also be clear that iconography clarifies material in the textual sources that may be unclear or unfamiliar—for example, what does “rip up” (טָרַף) *look like* when used with lions? Of course, readers generally have ideas—informed or otherwise—about what they read. But these ideas, especially when the language is graphic and metaphorical are often based on or heavily interactive with visual data.⁶ Insofar as such a judgment is correct, the iconographical evidence is not only helpful, it is indispensable, especially when dealing with an ancient user’s sign-context, and even more so when that sign-context lacks extensive literary remains. It is unfortunate that researchers have often chosen just one database—usually text over art—rather than investigating both.⁷ Yet it

⁶ Cf., e.g., M. O’Connor, “The Contours of Biblical Hebrew Verse: An Afterword to Hebrew Verse Structure,” in *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 631; and, for the complex relationship between text and image, see W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); and idem, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁷ Cf. Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient: An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 5: “The progressive separation of the development of historical-philological study from that of the study of artistic monuments in Near Eastern studies has had unfortunate consequences.” See also the conclusions of Izak Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Baʿal: Late Bronze and Iron Age I Periods (c 1500-1000 BCE)* (OBO 140; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1994), 264: “Only by using both the textual and visual sources will we be able to come to a re-evaluation and appreciation of the intrinsic religious values of ancient Canaanite society.”

must also be admitted that the artistic data are not always transparent in meaning (though neither, it should be added, are the texts) and the ideal situation is found only when textual and artistic material can be correlated in a mutually enlightening fashion. Only rarely does such a situation—one in which an image is accompanied by an explanatory caption, for example—present itself in the archaeological record. Generally speaking, it is only large, monumental art that has the space to present both image and accompanying text. Ironically, even when such a scenario is present, at times the caption does not correspond to the image! But the present work has sought to show that, even if this situation does not exist archaeologically, it can exist academically, even exegetically. Hence, I have sought to correlate both visual and textual data and have brought each to bear on an understanding of the lion image in the Hebrew Bible.

What more can be said about that image? What is the specific force of that metaphor? The preceding pages go a considerable distance in their attempt to answer both questions. Nevertheless, in light of much previous research on the lion in the Hebrew Bible (and elsewhere), it is worth repeating a point that has already been stressed earlier in this work. It is simply this: while the lion is found as an image and metaphor in a variety of contexts, its function and meaning does not seem to be truly ambiguous so much as polyvalent—open to multiple uses. The lion, in the argument presented here, draws its strength and vitality as an image and as a metaphor primarily from the power and threat it represents and symbolizes, but that power and threat is differently experienced and variously portrayed depending on the perspective of the observer, the user of the image/metaphor, and the one who encounters the image or receives the metaphor. Seen in this way, the lion and its power are not in themselves ambiguous—they remain threatening and dominant, forces to be reckoned with—but they can be differently focused and ambivalently used. The distinction is a fine but important one. And the distinction must be immediately qualified by pointing out that the material presented in this work thoroughly demonstrates that any attempt to reduce the signification of the lion image to just one specific referent or only one particular tenor—even if that tenor is power, predatory dominance, or the like—would be ill-conceived. The lion as both image and metaphor is complex enough both within itself and within and across its many uses to guard against any sort of simplistic, substitutionary understanding of its valence. And, again, this should come as no surprise when one considers the lion metaphor, or any metaphor for that matter, in the light of recent metaphor theory (§1.2).

Many further points could be made about the use and meanings of the lion as image and metaphor; since such information is presented elsewhere in this book (especially Chapter 5), it will not be repeated here. Instead, given the theological concerns with which this study began, it is in order to offer a few closing remarks on the use of the lion as a *theological metaphor*.

Whether or not lion imagery with reference to the divine can help in the vexed question of gendered God-language is debatable, largely because the evidence is mixed. On the one hand, lions, too, are gendered species, but there does not appear to be any clear instance where Yahweh is obviously figured as a female lion in extended fashion (but see §5.4.1 and §§2.3.1 and 2.3.4 on Ps 111:5). Some scholars have argued that לביא is a term meaning “lioness”—and Yahweh is called a לביא at several points—but this interpretation of the word seems unlikely on grammatical, syntactical, and comparative grounds.⁸ If לביא could be shown to be unambiguously feminine, the matter would, of course, be different, but as it stands this evidence is uncertain at best and probably contrariwise. Moreover, the fact that one of the primary referents in the most developed lion metaphor in the Hebrew Bible (Ezekiel 19; not of God) is female and that the metaphor is negative in tone is further evidence that the deity-as-lion image may not be the most useful to those looking for a female element in Israel’s God-language. But this must be clarified: not, that is, on the surface of the texts themselves, nor at the level of the language used therein. However, at other levels the situation might be quite different. These other levels include both the *context* of the lion metaphors (what is sometimes called the frame), and the *tradition* of the metaphor.

Contextually, there are a number of passages wherein the Deity is portrayed as a lion that couple the lion image with other, more clearly female, images. An example that has been mentioned repeatedly (see, e.g., §5.4.1) is Hos 13:8, where Yahweh-as-lion is coupled with Yahweh-as-(mother-)bear bereaved of cubs. This, despite the philological data regarding לביא, is at least one example that the lion image could be employed in contexts where female aspects also figure in. As to the *tradition* of the metaphor, Chapter 5 has argued that Yahweh’s leonine profile may well be related—either in origin or as a reflex of some sort—to the most important lion goddesses found in the ancient Near East. If this is so, it would constitute further evidence that Yahweh incorporated much that was originally associated with the goddess into the person of a (primarily-presented-as) male deity. This is, on the one hand, somewhat ironic. On the other hand, if it is correct, it would also indicate that one of the most significant, important, and terrifying animal images applied to the God of Israel was originally inspired by female antecedents.

But, when coming to grips with the contribution of the lion image as a metaphor for God to contemporary discussions of God-language, the matter of gender is, ultimately, of secondary import.⁹ This is so primarily because the

⁸ Among other things, this interpretation is apparently a reflex of the influence of the Vulgate, which frequently translates לביא with *leaeana* (“lioness”). See further Appendix 1.

⁹ Cf. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 206, who entertains the possibility that metaphors might be “superficially” (his term) marked for gender but “without any

texts make very little of the gender issue and because the strongest case for gendered analysis is comparative and tradition-historical, lying, for the most part, *behind* the present text of the Hebrew Bible. Instead, it is the force of the lion image *qua* animal image (regardless of gender) that constitutes its major contribution to God-language.¹⁰ This contribution, to come full circle, has to do with power, threat, ferocity, dominance, predation, violence, fear, and the other associations (the “system of associated commonplaces”) of the lion detailed in this study. This is not terribly new or surprising: the lion continues to inspire similar feelings today—even among those who have never faced a lion in the wild.¹¹ So, despite the (dead?) metaphorical equation “Lion = Brave,” discussed in Chapter 1 and familiar today, the metaphorical quality of Yahweh-as-lion, while different, is, nevertheless, still understandable today—even in industrialized societies where the only encounter with such an animal would generally be in the controlled environment of a zoo. But, despite its understandability (at one level at least), it is hoped that the present study has filled out what is a familiar and understandable metaphor with a detail and vividness that is *not* familiar nor understandable, that is perhaps even odd in the contemporary context—at least, in the contemporary ecclesial and theological context. The image of God as a lion evokes a side of Yahweh that is not often heard within the walls of a church or synagogue or from the steps of a pulpit, at least of the mainline varieties. Yet it is a pronounced and highly developed metaphor in Israel’s speech about God. It articulates in a unique way the violence and wrath of God, God’s destruction, even God’s terror. And the lion image does this in a way that would be impossible, even ethically improper, to manage if the metaphor was thoroughly anthropomorphic and gendered.¹²

underlying intention to make a statement about the gender of the deity. Such metaphors may be thematically neutral with respect to gender.”

- 10 Note *ibid.*, 207: “What is at stake in texts that use metaphors of the sorts mentioned above is not divine gender. Rather, the point is the necessity to express certain aspects of God’s being, such as his care, protection, compassion, and so forth. Some of these traits are best expressed by metaphors deriving from human females, others by metaphors derived from males of one and the same humanity.” I would add, at the end of the present work, that some traits are best expressed by *neither*. That is, some traits are best expressed by non-human metaphors. See further below. Cf. also Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOTSup 65; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 26-27, 31, 227, 229 on the rhetorical force of images as constituting their primary function.
- 11 See, e.g., Delinda Hutchins Gladstone, “The Self-Reported Fears of Three-, Four-, and Five-Year-Old Children” (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1990), which lists the lion as among the top fears reported by children of these ages.
- 12 See, e.g., Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); and Yvonne Sherwood, *The Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea’s Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective* (JSOTSup 212, GCT 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) for two works on the problematics of metaphorizing God as a husband.

In sum, the divine lion metaphor reveals a side of God that many might find uncomfortable—violent, to be sure, and, consequently, *passé*—but that must nevertheless be incorporated if our theology, that is, *our* speech about God, is to be connected to Israel's theology, that is, *its* speech about God. How this terrifying image might combine with other, more amiable images in the Bible is a topic for another time as it concerns the broader question of a biblical theology, the correspondences and divergences between texts and traditions, and how these are held, or not held, together by contemporary interpreters. Even so, two dialogue partners are of some interest here. The first is St. Anselm. For Anselm, God was the thing the greater than which cannot be thought.¹³ In a scientific age like ours, such a concept may often be conceived in terms of the universe, its origin, extent, and limits.¹⁴ For Israel, such a concept—if it was operative at all—was certainly much smaller than the universe we know, but was no less huge in their minds: the world and the fullness thereof (cf. Ps 24:1). Yet perhaps Anselm's idea can also be related to the lion, which, as an image for power, strength, ferocity, dominance, and so forth, would seem to be the greater than which cannot be thought—at least in the ancient world.¹⁵ If so, the use of such an image with reference to God communicates something more than simply the *quality* of the naturalistic power of actual lions and, by metaphorical extension, of God, as significant as that is. It also communicates something about the *quantity* of God's power—more specifically, something about the largeness and absoluteness of it.

The second, much more recent dialogue partner is the popular Christian writer C. S. Lewis. The lines of Mr. and Mrs. Beaver in his novel, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, quoted as the epigraph to this work, may not be too far amiss of Israel's conception:¹⁶ the lion that is Yahweh—like the lion

¹³ "And, indeed, we believe that thou art a being than which nothing greater can be conceived" (*Proslogium* 2). See Anselm, *Prologium; Monologium; An Appendix in Behalf of the Fool by Gaunilon; and Cur Deus Homo* (trans. Sidney Norton Deane; La Salle: Open Court, 1944), 7; cf. also *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings* (2d ed.; ed. Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, David Basinger; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 165.

¹⁴ The issue for Anselm, of course, was not only one of size but also one of quality. See Karl Barth's discussion in *Anselm: Fides Quarens Intellectum* (Richmond: John Knox, 1960), 73–78; excerpted in Clifford Green, ed., *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom* (The Making of Modern Theology; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 140–47.

¹⁵ Especially in the natural, animal world. Recall that images where the lion is defeated are, at best, rare. There are, of course, a number of supernatural images that would be equally terrifying to ancient sensibilities. Not surprisingly, however, many of these were at least partially leonine.

¹⁶ Cf. also Dennis T. Olson, "The Lion, the Itch and the Wardrobe: Hosea 5:8-6:6 as a Case Study in the Contemporary Interpretation and Authority of Scripture," *CurTM* 23 (1996): 173–84, who has alluded to Lewis's work with reference to the Hosean text.

Aslan that is the Christ-figure in Lewis's "Chronicles of Narnia," is definitely *not tame* but, Israel would also affirm, this lion is *good*.¹⁷

Whatever the value of these more recent dialogue partners, it is not to be missed that these insights, along with the many others gleaned in this work, are the products of an *animal* image and an *animal* metaphor. The present study thus takes its place with other recent attempts to take seriously the theological significance of the non-human world.¹⁸

6.4. CONCLUSION

Israel preserved the dialectic of Yahweh as good and protecting and Yahweh as judging and threatening. In many ways, the lion image is ideally suited to function in both capacities in admirable fashion, even though the primary emphasis clearly lies on the threatening aspect. The lion's ability to fit this dialectic may be one further, perhaps even the most important, reason why it is the most frequently-used animal image of God in the Hebrew Bible.

Yet, as Max Black's famous saying about the interactive nature of the metaphor "man is a wolf" would remind us, the lion is also affected by its use in metaphorical speech.¹⁹ On the one hand, its frequent association with the mighty one and the monarch helps to explain the royal connotations of the lion as the "king of the beasts" (a metaphor itself!).²⁰ On the other hand, the frequent association of the lion with the deity in the Hebrew Bible means that the lion walks away from this type of metaphorical construction looking a good bit more supernatural. Its grace is no longer only feline—it is divine. Its ferocity is no longer purely mammalian—it is an act of God. The divine

¹⁷ Cf. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 7:78: "in it [the lion] Jews represented their hope in a saving divine force whose beneficence would be the reverse side of its obverse ferocity"; 79: "the conception that God is the lion which destroys but in his very destructiveness is the hope of the people appears early as a Jewish motif."

¹⁸ See, e.g., Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 2:200-203; Kimberley C. Patton, "He who sits in the heavens laughs": Recovering Animal Theology in the Abrahamic Traditions," *HTR* 93 (2000): 401-34; Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2: *The Works of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 112-32; and the works cited in Chapter 1 (§1.1). See also Peter Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere: Studien zum Verhältnis von Mensch und Tier im alten Israel* (OBO 187; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 2002); and Bernd Janowski, Ute Neumann-Gorsolke, and Uwe Gleßner, ed., *Gefährten und Feinde des Menschen: Das Tier in der Lebenswelt des alten Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1993).

¹⁹ Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), 44: "If to call a man a wolf is to put him in a special light, we must not forget that the metaphor makes the wolf seem more human than he otherwise would." Cf. the similar, but theological, perspective in Patton, "He who sits in the heavens laughs," especially 427-34.

²⁰ Cf. Peter Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 192: "In jedem Fall liegt die Übertragung des Löwenbildes auf Herrscher nahe: Der König eines Volkes wird mit dem König der Tiere verglichen."

connections make it all the more tragic that this beautiful—and, given the interactive nature of metaphor, one might say spiritual—creature is one of the globe's endangered species.²¹ The situation is especially pronounced with regard to the Persian lion (*Panthera leo persica*), which is most likely the lion that would have inhabited Mesopotamia and, perhaps, ancient Israel/Palestine and areas in the northern Levant. Given certain protections, the probability of total extinction is, at present, thankfully quite low. Even so, the need for protection status is unlikely to ever change without massive intervention and assistance. The Asiatic lion currently exists only as a single population in India. At the time of this writing, there are only three lions in North American zoos of pure Persian bloodline with the global total for zoos at only eighty-two, twenty-three of which are outside India.²² So, as a last word, I would be remiss if I did not point out that the ongoing life and significance of lion imagery and lion metaphor, whether in the Hebrew Bible or elsewhere, is closely connected with the survival of this majestic and terrifying animal. If it were to vanish from the face of our planet, the loss would be great. Part of our language and understanding of God would also vanish, and we would be deprived of an animal that, both despite of and on account of the fear it evokes, is somehow able to capture something seminal and indispensable about our God.

²¹ Protection Status: The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) = Appendix 1 (all species threatened with extinction that are affected by commercial trade); The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) = Critically Endangered (species faces high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future due to population decline or habitat reduction; survival is unlikely if factors remain the same) and = "Locally extinct: species can no longer be located in the designated sector of its former range." See Allan S. Gilbert, "The Native Fauna of the Ancient Near East," in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (HdO 64; ed. Billie Jean Collins; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 58 (citation) and 54; see also idem, "The Flora and Fauna of the Ancient Near East," *CANE* 1:167, 169; and "Asiatic Lion: *Panthera leo persica* (Meyer, 1826)" [article on-line]; available from <http://lynx.uio.no/catfolk/asaleo02.htm> [through [/asaleo07.htm](http://lynx.uio.no/catfolk/asaleo07.htm); and [/asaleof1.htm](http://lynx.uio.no/catfolk/asaleof1.htm)]; Internet; accessed 1 November 1999, 19 June 2000, 12 June 2003 (and the links there). The Asiatic lion is fully protected in India.

²² "Asiatic Lion," n.p. Note that the copyright on this material is 1996.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Terminology for “Lion” in the Hebrew Bible¹

“Hebrew has at least six words for ‘lion’....The precise denotation of each is not known.”²

“To distinguish between the different words for lion is difficult....Some may refer to age, some to prowess, etc.”³

As many scholars have noted, and the epigraphs above readily attest, complete clarity regarding the exact meaning and significance of each of the terms used for “lion” in the Hebrew Bible is not forthcoming. Anderson and Freedman’s comment actually indicates that we cannot even be sure how many lion terms there are.⁴ That being said, the fact that there are several different terms used for the animal is not without anthropological and zoological significance. Moreover, each of the several terms can be investigated, and the information gleaned from both historical-comparative philology and the literary contexts wherein the words are used can help to clarify or at least distinguish between the different terms. Even so, given the limitations of the evidence, definite conclusions are not to be had. Indeed, in the light of genre distribution and the relative frequencies (low or high) of the terms, it must be allowed that some of the terms (e.g., אַרִי/אַרְיָה and לִבְיָא) may well be generic lion appellations, with others (e.g., נֹר and כַּפִּיר) designating lions of specific ages, with still others (e.g., לִישׁ and שַׁחַל) serving as (exclusively) poetic terms, whose exact nuance is no longer recoverable.

¹ This appendix, as is clear from the notes, is heavily indebted to Michael Matthew Kaplan’s work in Part I (“The Biblical Lion Words”) of his dissertation (“The Lion in the Hebrew Bible: A Study of a Biblical Metaphor” [Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981], 20–113).

² Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AB 24; Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 414.

³ *TWOT*, 1:453.

⁴ Though they are not specific, the confusion probably stems from one of two issues: 1) whether נֹר is (exclusively) a lion term; or 2) whether אַרִי and אַרְיָה are to be considered different words. On both issues, see further below. Note also Peter Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere: Studien zum Verhältnis von Mensch und Tier im alten Israel* (OBO 187; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 2002), 195–96 n. 215 who lists ten lion terms (those included in this Appendix along with several forms derivable from לִבְיָא); cf. *b. Sanh.* 95a which lists six.

אַרִי/אַרְיָה

1. Introductory Statement

Apart from Nah 2:12 and the Kethib/Qere issue at 2 Sam 23:20 and Lam 3:10, אַרְיָה and אַרִי never occur together in the same verse. Neither do they appear as parallel terms. These considerations, combined with other factors,⁵ have led many scholars to treat the two as by-forms on analogy with combinations such as בָּכָה/בֹּכֶה/בָּכָה (‘‘to weep, weeping’’),⁶ שָׂדֵה/שָׂדֵה (‘‘field’’),⁷ שָׁבִי/שָׁבִי/שָׁבִי (‘‘to take captive, captivity, captive[s]’’),⁸ and שָׁתִי/שָׁתִי/שָׁתִי (‘‘to drink, act of drinking, place of drinking’’).⁹ However, caution on this point is warranted in the light of several observations. Perhaps the most important of these is the fact that the morphologies and phonological realizations of אַרְיָה and אַרִי do not follow the pattern typically discernable for these other forms.¹⁰ That is, one would expect the masculine singular nominal base form to be something like *אַרְיָה. While this obviously depends on the root of the word(s),¹¹ such a form is not clearly derivable from the evidence surrounding אַרְיָה and אַרִי. Another important consideration is the fact that both terms appear together in Nah 2:12, but this could be debated as אַרִי there is plural (אַרְיִים), and, as אַרְיָה never occurs in the plural, one cannot be certain what form its plural would take.¹² Even so, it is possible that the Kethib/Qere issues in the MT of 2 Sam 23:20 and Lam 3:10 reflect an awareness that there was a difference between these two terms (see Chapter 2 §2.2.1.2)—at least for the Masoretes—but this, too, is uncertain. So, while it is clear that a case can be made that אַרְיָה and אַרִי are related, perhaps even by-forms—and this may well be the case—it is probably safest to continue to treat them as distinct lexemes, despite the fact that they cannot be semantically distinguished. At the very least it can be said that the two are not simple orthographic variants, especially given the vocalization of אַרְיָה. That vocalization, however, raises an interesting point. One linguistic possibility that, to my knowledge, has not yet been posited with regard to אַרְיָה/אַרִי deserves consideration: tabooistic distortion.¹³ Is it possible that the

⁵ E.g., the two terms may be used interchangeably in Judges 14 (see Appendix 3), but the possibility that the proverb in 14:18 is independent, at least originally, should not be underestimated.

⁶ See *HALOT* 1:130; B–L §§72 h’ (p. 577), 72q’ (p. 579).

⁷ See *HALOT* 3:1307–1309; B–L §§17q (p. 203), 61d (p. 502), 73k (pp. 587–88).

⁸ See *HALOT* 4:1382–83, 1390–92.

⁹ See *HALOT* 4:1667–1670; B–L §61x’ (pp. 458–59).

¹⁰ See GKC §§84^a f (p. 230), 92ll (p. 272).

¹¹ See the discussion in §§4, 12–13 below.

¹² I.e., would it be identical to the plural of אַרִי (so: אַרְיִים)? Cf. the plural of אַרְיָה in Aramaic (§3 below).

¹³ For the phenomenon, see Hans Henrich Hock, *Principles of Historical Linguistics* (2d ed.; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991), 50–51, 295–96, 303–305. I thank John

current vocalization of אַרְיָה, which is unusual and virtually unparalleled,¹⁴ is the result of such deformation,¹⁵ perhaps given the fear that the lion evoked?¹⁶ If so, it might indicate that אַרְיָה is a form of אַרִי (the more explainable form; cf. צִבְּי, “gazelle”) that has been distorted. Such distortions, Hock points out, “may considerably or even severely limit our ability to reconstruct” the original word in question.¹⁷ An inability to reconstruct is an accurate depiction of the difficulties regarding אַרְיָה/אַרִי. Unfortunately, as attractive as the possibility of tabooistic distortion is, it too must remain uncertain.

In sum, then, the best course of action remains one that presents אַרְיָה and אַרִי separately—as discrete lexemes, *perhaps* from the same root—and yet together under a broader rubric that recognizes their close connection(s).

2. Frequency, Location, and Instances of אַרְיָה

This term, by far the highest frequency lion word, occurs 57 times in the Hebrew Bible:¹⁸

Hebrew: Gen 49:9 (2x); Deut 33:22; Judg 14:8 (2x), 9; 2 Sam 17:10, 23:20 (Kethib); 1 Kgs 13:24 (2x), 25, 26, 28 (2x), 20:36 (2x); Isa 11:7, 15:9, 21:8, 31:4, 35:9, 65:25; Jer 2:30, 4:7, 5:6, 12:8, 49:19, 50:44; Ezek 1:10, 10:14; Hos 11:10; Joel 1:6; Amos 3:4, 8; Micah 5:7; Nah 2:12 (2x), 13; Ps 7:3, 10:9, 17:12, 22:14, 22; Job 4:10; Eccl 9:4; Lam 3:10 (Kethib); 1 Chr 12:9.

Aramaic: Dan 6:8, 13, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25 (2x), 28, 7:4.

3. Comments on the Morphology, Gender, etc., of אַרְיָה

In Hebrew, אַרְיָה appears only in the singular.¹⁹ Grammarians, lexicists, and syntax all concur that it is a masculine noun.²⁰ In Aramaic, the singular אַרְיָה

Huehnergard (personal communication) for bringing this possibility to my attention with regard to the problems surrounding אַרְיָה/אַרִי.

¹⁴ In addition to אֲבִנֶנֶט and אֲבִרֶךְ (Egyptian loans; see §4 below), note also Hebrew עֲשָׂרָה.

¹⁵ I.e., could the process have been, on analogy with שָׁבִי > שָׁבָה (masculine) and שָׁבָה (feminine), אַרִי > אַרְיָה (masculine) and *אַרְיָה (feminine?!) > (tabooistic distortion) אַרְיָה? One cannot know for certain and, whatever the case, it is clear that אַרְיָה is masculine in the Hebrew Bible. See §3 below.

¹⁶ Cf. Hock, *Principles of Historical Linguistics*, 305 on the phenomenon: “If...reference had to be made...[to the subject in question], tabooistic distortion made it possible to do so without actually uttering the awesome word.”

¹⁷ Ibid., 303.

¹⁸ Frequency totals here and throughout this Appendix do not include related GNs and PN. Note that the Kethib readings are counted here with אַרְיָה, not with אַרִי (Qere; §10 below).

¹⁹ BDB 71; HALOT 1:88. But see note 12 above.

occurs only once (Dan 7:4); the other nine instances are the determined plural form (אַרְיֹתָא). Here, too, the term is masculine in gender.²¹

4. Semitic Cognates for אַרְיֹתָא

Later Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, Syriac, and Mandaic all attest a cognate *ḥary%*.²² Indeed, some philologists have considered Hebrew אַרְיֹתָא to be an early Aramaic loanword.²³ Kaplan, however, has taken issue with this.²⁴ He argues that the ה- in final position is consonantal and that the pointing with *ḥere* (..) “need not always reflect monophthongization.”²⁵ If this is correct, it would indicate that אַרְיֹתָא is not related to “the pan-Semitic root *ḥrw*” and its derivatives, most of which refer to other, non-leonine animals (sometimes domesticated).²⁶ Neither would it be cognate to Akkadian *a/erū*, “eagle,” the

²⁰ See, e.g., Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §6.5.1a (p. 107); B-L §62g' (p. 513); BDB 71; and the verbs in 1 Kgs 13:24, respectively.

²¹ See Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (2 vols.; New York: Judaica, 1992), 1:118–19; and the verbs in Dan 6:23 and 25. The plural is irregular (see Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* [5th printing; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983], §54 [p. 28]). Syntactically, Dan 7:4 is somewhat ambiguous. A feminine suffix (לָהּ) occurs with reference to the first beast (וְנִפְיָן דִּי נִשְׂר לָהּ: “and it had eagle’s wings”) “but it may refer back to ‘beast’ or [to] ‘first,’ [both of] which are feminine” (John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 274 n. 11).

²² See HALOT 1:87. See also §13 below.

²³ HALOT 1:87 is uncertain, but see, among others, TLOT 1:170; Max Wagner, *Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch* (BZAW 96; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1966), 29–30; and Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1927), 193 n. 2: “Das hebr. אַרְיֹתָא muß hiernach aram. Lehnwort sein (echt heb. wäre *אַרְיֹתָא).” On the ending, see also B-L §17o (p. 203).

²⁴ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 34–37.

²⁵ Ibid., 36; see note 23. Cf. B-L §62g' (p. 513), who state that the final syllable in אַרְיֹתָא “gehört aber wohl zum Stamm.” Elsewhere, Bauer and Leander write that “[d]as -ץ in אַרְיֹתָא...ist wohl...aus [*-ay]” (*Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, 200 [§521]; cf. §9j [p. 37]). In Kaplan’s view, one must perhaps posit that the Masoretes no longer recognized the root as III-הּ as they did not point the הּ with *mappiq*.

²⁶ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 36. Cf. J. J. Glück, “*ḥ^arī* and *lavīḥ* (*labīḥ*)—an Etymological Study,” ZAW 81 (1969): 235 n. 23: “To be quite accurate, a root similar to *ḥry* exists in all the Semitic languages but it refers to domestic animals.” Note Akkadian *arwūm* “gazelle(?)” (TDOT, 1:375–76 disassociates Akkadian *armu*, which denotes some sort of mountain goat); Ethiopic *ḥarwē* “wild animal” (the normal Ethiopic word for “lion” is *ḥanbāsa* [Tigrina] or *ḥanbas%* [Ge'ez]— see E. Ullendorff, “The Contribution of South Semitics to Hebrew Lexicography,” VT 6 [1956]: 192; Patrick R. Bennett, *Comparative Semitic Linguistics: A Manual* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998], 129, 148, 174, 227, 240); Old South Arabian *ḥrw* “ibex”; Arabic *ḥurwāyātun*, *ḥarwāyat* “ibexes, wild sheep.” For other possible cognates, see TDOT, 1:375; Edward Lipiński, “‘Lion’ and ‘Lioness’ in Northwest Semitic,” in *Michael: Historical, Epigraphical and Biblical*

so-called “lion of the air,” as that term apparently began with *l* not *l̥*,²⁷ though this is not completely certain. Instead, the only true cognate of Biblical Hebrew *אֲרִיָּה* would be Aramaic *lary* *ܠܪܝܬܐ* (*laryṭā*) (“lion”), which is diachronically well attested.²⁸

Kaplan goes on to posit that *אֲרִיָּה* may be derived from a Northwest Semitic root **ryh* meaning “lion.”²⁹ He also points out that the vocalic pattern in *אֲרִיָּה* is found in *אֲבִיָּה* (e.g., Exod 28:4, 29:9; Lev 8:7; etc.) and *אֲבִירָה* (Gen 41:43), both of which are often understood to be Egyptian loanwords.³⁰ At this point, then, Egyptian *ir* and/or *rw* might become possible cognates for *אֲרִיָּה*,³¹ if not its actual forebear(s).³² Cognates in other languages might also exist, but this remains uncertain.³³ Whatever the case, given §1 above, it should be reiterated here that, despite Kaplan’s (and others’) work, the relationship of *אֲרִיָּה* to *אֲרִי* and the possible root(s) of both (or either) remain vexed questions.³⁴

Studies in Honor of Prof. Michael Heltzer (ed. Yitzhak Avishur and Robert Deutsch; Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publications, 1999), 213–20; and Bennett, *Comparative Semitic Linguistics*, 129, 148, 157, 174, 227, 240–41. Not all of the referents of these words are domesticated animals, though one might also note the related Hebrew *lurwā* and Akkadian *urū(m)* “stall.” However, Ugaritic *pn arw* in KTU 6.62, referring to a lion head, ought not be overlooked.

²⁷ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 36; *contra* Wolfram von Soden, “*aqrabu* und *našru*,” *AfO* 18 (1957–1958): 393; and *AHW* 1:247. Following Jastrow and others, Kaplan suggests Aramaic *עֲרִיָּא* as the equivalent to Akkadian *alēru*. However, as von Soden points out, Akkadian *erū* is also attested as *arū*. This makes phonological precision less possible. See further GAG §§9 and 23 (pp. 11–12 and 25–26, respectively).

²⁸ See Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 36.

²⁹ Ibid. He points to a homonymous root that occurs in Arabic and means “to go to and fro” (ibid., 37 and 209 n. 21; see Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* [8 parts; London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–1893], 3:1205). Cf. also Glück, “*ʔr* and *lavil*,” 232–35 and Lipiński, “Lion and Lioness,” 214 on the *ʔ* as prosthetic.

³⁰ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 37 and 209 n. 23. See further Maximilian Ellenbogen, *Foreign Words in the Old Testament: Their Origin and Etymology* (London: Luzac and Company, 1962), 2–5; *HALOT* 1:8, 10; BDB 7–8.

³¹ Note Glück’s assessment of the relationship with Egyptian *rw*: “Hebrew *ʔr* is actually the same word as the Egyptian *rw* with Aleph prostheticum and with the interchange of *w* and *y*, a phenomenon very common in all the Semitic languages, including Egyptian” (“*ʔr* and *lavil*,” 235). Similarly, Lipiński, “Lion and Lioness,” 214.

³² Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 37: “So, it is possible that *אֲרִיָּה* may ultimately be of Egyptian origin.” More strongly, Lipiński, “Lion and Lioness,” 214: “The initial *l̥* of **larweh* was originally prosthetic and the root **rwly* is obviously related to Egyptian *rw*, ‘(recumbent) lion.’”

³³ For instance, Dahood has wondered if Ugaritic *ary*, typically translated as “kinsman” or the like (see, e.g., *UT* #349/p. 366), might be connected with Hebrew *אֲרִיָּה* (Mitchell Dahood, “The Value of Ugaritic for Textual Criticism,” *Bib* 40 [1959]: 161–62 n. 2).

³⁴ I.e., are they both derived from **ארה*? Or is *אֲרִיָּה* from a quadrilateral, **laryay-* or **larway-* or the like, with *אֲרִי* a simplified, shortened form? For the quadrilateral option, see Wagner, *Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen*, 29; Theodor

5. *Non-Semitic Cognates for אריה*

For Mycenaean *re-wo*, see §13 below.

6. *Versions*

The LXX translates אריה with λέων in almost every instance save four.³⁵ The feminine λέαινα occurs once in Dan 7:4, and the other three passages are well-known cruxes: 2 Kgs 15:25 (PN τοῦ Ἀρια),³⁶ Isa 15:9 (Ἀριηγ),³⁷ and Isa 21:8 (PN Ουριαν). The Targum uses either אריא (“lion”; the majority of cases) or אריה (Amos 3:4, 8). In five instances, however, the Targum translates אריה with some form of נולך (Isa 15:9, 35:9; Jer 4:7, Nah 2:12, 13), “perhaps...to indicate the translator’s belief” that אריה here “is metaphorically applied to people.”³⁸ The Vulgate uses *leo* (“lion”) in every instance³⁹ except 2 Kgs 15:25 (*Ari*);⁴⁰ Dan 7:4 uses the feminine *leaena* (“lioness”).⁴¹

7. *אריה with Other Lion Terms*

אריה is used with נור in the compound construct phrase נור אריה (“a lion’s cub”) in Gen 49:9, Deut 33:22, and Nah 2:12. A similar, if not synonymous phrase (בני לביא) appears in Job 4:11. The latter two passages, along with their context, deserve brief treatment as together they contain all of the lion terms.

7.1. *Nah 2:12–13.* אריה appears here in close combination with ארי, נור, לביא,⁴² and כפיר. The phrase נור אריה has already been mentioned; it appears in parallel with the asyndetic (and often emended) אריה לביא.⁴³ In these verses the אריה kills prey for his cubs (נרותיו) and for his lionesses (ללבאותיו). Both comments provide clear indication of the gender of אריה; the former adds some insight into its relative age (i.e., older than a נור).

7.2. *Job 4:10–11.* These verses place אריה in context with שחל and כפיר (both parallel terms), ליש, and בני לביא. The latter term is somewhat unexpected given the existence of נור, which is typically used for the

Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (repr., Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001), §146 (p. 93); Bauer and Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, §51m" (p. 193).

³⁵ Note also the minuses at 1 Kgs 13:26 and Ezek 10:14 (Vulgate: *leo* in both cases) and the minus at Dan 6:28 (uncial tradition; Theodotian: λέων; cf. Vulgate: *leo*).

³⁶ See under PNs and GNs (§8) below.

³⁷ Perhaps under the influence of the combination of Ariel and Moab in 2 Sam 23:20?

³⁸ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 34.

³⁹ Note the minus in Micah 5:7. LXX reads λέων.

⁴⁰ Perhaps following LXX. See under PNs and GNs (§8) below.

⁴¹ Perhaps following LXX. For *leaena* in the Vulgate, see especially under לביא below.

⁴² Including both masculine singular and feminine plural forms. See below under לביא.

⁴³ See Appendix 3 and further below under נור and לביא.

lion's young.⁴⁴ However, נֹר occurs only with אַרְיָה in this fashion. Therefore it would seem that the young of the לְבִיא is called, not נֹר לְבִיא but לְבִיא בֶן, though with only one example of the latter this cannot be certain. The compound terms are functionally synonymous, especially in light of the similar contextual imagery found in Nah 2:13 and Job 4:11.

As already indicated, אַרְיָה appears with several of these lion terms elsewhere as well. In addition to the texts already mentioned, the following round out the list: In Gen 49:9, לְבִיא and אַרְיָה are the subject of one verb (רָבִץ). In Joel 1:6, the two are parallel along with words for teeth. אַרְיָה appears a number of times with כָּפִיר: in parallel in Isa 31:4; Amos 3:4; Micah 5:7; and Ps 17:12.⁴⁵

8. PNs and GNs Relating to אַרְיָה

הַאֲרִיָּה occurs in 2 Kgs 15:25 and is typically taken as a PN “Aryeh.” The main problem here is the presence of the definite article, which is also reflected in the LXX (τοῦ Ἀρυᾶ). The other Versions are similarly difficult or confused.⁴⁶ Bernhard Stade wondered if both אֶת־אֲרֹנֶב and וְאֶת־הָאֲרִיָּה were displaced GNs from 2 Kgs 15:29;⁴⁷ perhaps both were originally glosses on Gilead in that verse.⁴⁸ Argob is used as a GN elsewhere (e.g., 1 Kgs 4:13), and this may have influenced the Vulgate and other sources. But it may also indicate that אַרְיָה in 2 Kgs 15:25 is a GN not a PN, perhaps somewhere near Argob.⁴⁹ Kaplan has pointed out, however, that Argob's use as a GN elsewhere does not preclude its use as a PN in 2 Kgs 15:25. There are other GNs that double as PNs—including names relating to lions terms.⁵⁰ So, according to Kaplan, “rendering אַרְיָה as ‘lion’ in 2 Kings 15:25 causes no exegetical problem.”⁵¹ Kaplan fails, however, to account for the definite article on a PN (not the case with

⁴⁴ The possible exception to this statement is Lam 4:3. See further under נֹר below.

⁴⁵ In his discussion of parallel terms, Kaplan makes אַרְיָה/כָּפִיר a fixed word pair, but his statistics are not impressive—5 of 16 instances vs., e.g., אַרְיָה/לְבִיא in 3 of 16 (“The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 43–44).

⁴⁶ See James A. Montgomery and Henry Snyder Gehman, *The Books of Kings* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960), 455–56. Note, e.g., the Vulgate, which translates in a spatial sense: “iuxta Argob et iuxta Ari.”

⁴⁷ Bernhard Stade, “Miscellen: Anmerkungen zu 2 Kō. 15–21,” ZAW 6 (1886): 160–61. See also John Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary* (2d ed.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 625 n. a.

⁴⁸ Stade, “Miscellen,” 160–61; and HALOT 1:88. Note the presence of Gilead in 2 Kgs 15:25 and 29 (though in different forms), perhaps encouraging parablepsis.

⁴⁹ In 1 Kgs 4:13, Argob is apparently located in Bashan. Note the connection of אַרְיָה and Bashan in Deut 33:22.

⁵⁰ See below under לִישׁ, לְבִיא, and כָּפִיר.

⁵¹ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 39.

Argob).⁵² The definite article would seem to indicate that **הַאֲרִיָּה** here, then, is either a GN or, perhaps, a military designation.⁵³ The issue is not yet settled.

9. Discussion of **אֲרִיָּה**

The etymological and philological data are not definitive in assessing the exact details regarding what type of lion the **אֲרִיָּה** is. Even Job 4 and Nahum 2 provide at best a list of various lion terms, neither specifying nor clarifying the differences or relationships between these. This lack of clarity has led to much speculation in the secondary literature, but it must unfortunately remain that. So, for instance, Koehler's oft-cited opinion that **אֲרִיָּה** (and also **אֲרִי**) is an African loanword designating the African lion (*Panthera leo*) whereas **לְבִיָּא** is the Asian lion (*Panthera leo persica*),⁵⁴ seems unsupportable, as Ullendorff has rightly pointed out.⁵⁵ However, Ullendorff's own conclusion—that **אֲרִיָּה** is a generic appellation designating some sort of wild beast (not necessarily a lion)⁵⁶—is equally problematic in light of the Nahum and Job texts. Why, in a context where other leonine terms are employed, would a non-lion word be included? Still further, the abundance of lion imagery used in connection with **אֲרִיָּה** (see Appendix 2) proves the point.

What is certain, then, is that **אֲרִיָּה** is a term used for a single, male lion. Additionally, the construct phrase **נֹר אֲרִיָּה** in Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Nahum would indicate that the **אֲרִיָּה** is not a cub or very young lion, especially as it is pictured as providing for “his cubs” and “his lionesses.” Beyond this, little else can be said. The asyndetic combination of Nah 2:12 might be equating **אֲרִיָּה** and **לְבִיָּא**, but this is not certain: it could just as easily be a case where two different, alternative readings have been preserved in the text. Moreover, many emend **לְבִיָּא** in this verse, following the LXX, which

⁵² One might compare, of course, **הַקֹּהֶלֶת** in Eccl 12:8, but this too may be a title of some sort (see Choon-Leong Seow, *Ecclesiastes* [AB 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997], 95–97).

⁵³ I.e.: “with Argob and with ‘the Lion’...” For the metaphorical use of animal names as designations, see Patrick D. Miller, Jr., “Animal Names as Designations in Ugaritic and Hebrew,” *UF* 2 (1970): 177–86.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Koehler, “Lexikologisch-Geographisches,” *ZDPV* 62 (1939): 115–25, especially 121–24. See also *HALOT* 1:87–98 (followed recently by *NIDOTTE* 1:514); Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 195–96 and n. 216.

⁵⁵ Ullendorff, “The Contribution of South Semitics,” 192. For further discussion of Koehler's view, see under **אֲרִי** and **לְבִיָּא** below.

⁵⁶ Ullendorff, “The Contribution of South Semitics,” 192–93: “Since the animal which we now call ‘lion’ was not indigenous in Palestine, we may, in fact, doubt whether *laryeh* always and necessarily describes that particular animal—or might, perhaps, be the generic term for the principal wild and strong beast of the Palestinian fauna.” Among other things, one might question Ullendorff's confidence that the lion was never indigenous in Palestine when the earliest fossil evidence of lions is found in the Late Pleistocene period (see Paula Wapnish, “Lions,” *OEANE* 3:361–62). On the whole matter of existence and the time of regional extinction, see Chapter 2 (§2.2.1.1).

evidently read לְבוֹא, and take the MT as a corruption.⁵⁷ Finally, Jastrow's suggestion, that אַרִי and אַרְיָה are both related to I אַרְהָ* ("to blaze" or the like; unattested in Biblical Hebrew) and thus refer to "the light-colored lion," while tantalizing, remains conjectural.⁵⁸

10. Frequency, Location, and Instances of אַרִי

אַרִי occurs 33 times in the Hebrew Bible:⁵⁹ Num 23:24, 24:9; Judg 14:5, 18; 1 Sam 17:34, 36, 37; 2 Sam 1:23; 1 Kgs 7:29 (2x), 36, 10:19, 20; 2 Kgs 17:25, 26; Isa 38:13; Jer 50:17, 51:38; Ezek 19:2, 6, 22:25; Amos 3:12, 5:19; Nah 2:12; Zeph 3:3; Ps 22:17; Prov 22:13, 26:13, 28:15; Song 4:8; 1 Chr 11:22; 2 Chr 9:18, 19.

11. Comments on the Morphology, Gender, etc., of אַרִי

Unlike אַרְיָה and several of the other lion terms, אַרִי does occur in the plural, and that quite frequently. Indeed, two plural forms are attested—the morphologically feminine plural form (אַרְיֹת), which is most common, and the morphologically masculine plural form (אַרְיִים), which appears only once (1 Kgs 10:20). In the case of the latter, the parallel reading in 2 Chr 9:19 (אַרְיֹת), makes the masculine plural look suspicious.⁶⁰ However, several other masculine nouns in Biblical Hebrew have double-plurals,⁶¹ and, regardless of the morphology of אַרִי, both singular and plural forms of the term function syntactically as masculine nouns, as indicated by the masculine verbs that are regularly used in connection with them (e.g., 1 Sam 17:34; 1 Kgs 10:19–20).⁶²

12. Semitic Cognates for אַרִי⁶³

אַרִי is a *qal* noun, apparently derived from the root *ʾr*y.⁶⁴ On this basis, Kaplan has argued that אַרִי is not cognate with the Semitic root *ʾr*w and its derivatives, most of which refer to other, non-leonine animals.⁶⁵ This would then leave only the Aramaic cognate אַרִי.⁶⁶ However, caution is warranted given the problems associated with III-w/y roots in Semitic, as well as problems associated with אַרְיָה and אַרִי (see §§1 and 4 above). If Kaplan is correct in deriving the former

⁵⁷ See further under לְבוֹא and Appendix 3.

⁵⁸ Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1:118–19. For I אַרְהָ* see *HALOT* 1:84.

⁵⁹ Note also the two instances of אַרִי in the Qere of 2 Sam 23:20 and Lam 3:10. In both cases, Kethib reads אַרְיָה.

⁶⁰ Cf. Montgomery and Gehman, *The Books of Kings*, 230: "but the variant [אַרְיִים] may be a double rdg., with intent of giving a different form for the artificial 'lion.'"

⁶¹ See B–L §63p (p. 516); GKC §87o (p. 243).

⁶² See Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible," 20.

⁶³ See also the discussions in §§1 and 4 above.

⁶⁴ See B–L §61p' (p. 457) and GKC §§24d (p. 83) and 84^ac (p. 229) for the form. See also §§1 and 4.

⁶⁵ Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible," 36; see §4 above.

⁶⁶ See §4 above and the cognates listed there.

from **ryh*, and the two terms are not, in fact, simple by-forms, then it remains at least possible that ארי is related to *rw*.⁶⁷

13. Non-Semitic Cognates for ארי

J. J. Glück has related ארי/אריה and לביא to Mycenaean *re-wo* “lion.”⁶⁸ Like Kaplan on אריה, Glück takes the א in ארי as prosthetic, and compares the remaining *ry* to the Mycenaean and to Egyptian *rw*. However, several problems remain: First, Hebrew ארי is apparently III-y not III-w, though the problems involved in such roots, their inter-linguistic equivalences, and their interrelationships rule out philological certainty (see §12 above). Second, there is also Egyptian *ir*, which could indicate that the א in ארי is not (merely) prosthetic. Third, it may be simpler to posit that Mycenaean *re-wo* was borrowed from Egyptian *rw*,⁶⁹ than to argue that the former term is also related to ארי/אריה (and לביא, according to Glück),⁷⁰ and/or is somehow the ancestor of these and the Egyptian terms *rw* and *ir*. Again, the matter is complex. For the purposes of the present study, it is enough to note that Glück has added further evidence that Hebrew ארי, like אריה, might be related to or borrowed from Egyptian *ir* and/or *rw*.⁷¹ Despite that, “the existence of a plausible Semitic etymology for ארי makes the postulation of a possible Egyptian origin for ארי unnecessary.”⁷²

14. Versions

The LXX consistently employs λέων for ארי except in the notorious crux at Ps 22:17 (ὠρξαν; see Appendix 3). The Targum utilizes אריא everywhere (even at Ps 22:17) except in five instances: Jer 50:17, Ezek 19:2, 6; Nah 2:12; and Zeph 3:3. At these points the Targum employs גלביא, “perhaps in order to indicate the translator’s view that in these verses אריה is metaphorically applied to people.”⁷³ The Vulgate translates ארי as *leo* except in three passages: the crux at Ps 22:17 (*foderunt*), 1 Kgs 10:20 (*leunculos*, “small lion”), and, not surprisingly, the parallel to the latter at 2 Chr 9:19 (*leunculos*).⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Note again Ugaritic *pn arw*, referring to a lion’s head, in *KTU* 6.62.

⁶⁸ Glück, “*ar* and *lavil*,” 232–35. So also Lipiński, “Lion and Lioness,” 214, at least for ארי/אריה.

⁶⁹ A borrow that Glück acknowledges (“*ar* and *lavil*,” 234).

⁷⁰ On phonological grounds, Glück’s argument regarding לביא is much less convincing than his work with ארי (and אריה). See §4 under לביא below.

⁷¹ See *WAS* 1:106 and 2:403, respectively, and further there for related terms. For *rw* see also Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 147.

⁷² Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 23.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 21 misses 2 Chr 9:19 and instead adds Prov 26:13 (cf. similarly 100). However, the reading *leaena* there stands for Hebrew ארי. ארי is translated by *leo*.

15. *ארי* with Other Lion Terms

ארי is found with a number of lion terms in Nah 2:12–13: *אריה*, *לביא* (note masculine singular and feminine plural forms), *גור*, and *כפיר*. Indeed, it is parallel to *כפיר* in Nah 2:12 and Ezek 19:2. The terms are not equivalent, however, as in Jer 51:38 it is *גורי אריות* which is parallel to *כפרים*. *ארי* occurs with *כפיר* in Ezek 19:6 as well, the *אריות* comprising the group within which the *כפיר* prowled. A distinction between *ארי* and *כפיר* is further supported by the existence of the awkward phrase *כפיר אריות* in Judg 14:5. *ארי* occurs in parallel with *לביא* in the Balaam oracles (Num 23:24, 24:9) and with *שחל* in Prov 26:13. In the context of Ezek 19:2, *אריות* appears with the unique feminine form *לביא*, again indicating a group within which the *לביא* moved. It may be of some interest that *ארי* is missing from the list of lion terms found in Job 4:10–11 (see §7.2 above).

16. PNs and GNs Relating to *ארי*

ארי does not occur as a PN or as a GN, except in the compound PN *אריאל* “Ariel” (Ezra 8:16) and the compound GN *אריאל* “Ariel” (Isa 29:1, 2, 7). The term *אראלם* (NRSV: “the valiant”) in Isa 33:7 might be related to *אריאל* (defective with suffix), though this is not certain. Similarly, the PN *אראלי* “Areli” (Gen 46:16; Num 26:17 [2x]) might also be connected, especially as a gentile (Num 26:17). For the problematic *אריאל* of 2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22, see Chapters 2 (§2.2.5) and 3 (§3.7) along with Excursus 1: Ariel. The etymology of “Ariel,” even in the form *אריאל*, is hotly debated. Some scholars prefer to relate the term, not to “lion,” but to the *אראיל* “altar-hearth” discussed in Ezek 43:15–16.⁷⁵ Be that as it may, if *אריאל* is (to be) connected to *ארי*, there is no reason to translate it “lioness of El/God”⁷⁶ as *ארי* itself is masculine.⁷⁷

17. Discussion of *ארי*

As was the case with *אריה*, it is the compound phrases used with *ארי* that shed the most light on what kind of lion is evoked by the term. Specifically, both *כפיר אריות* (Judg 14:5) and *גורי אריות* (Jer 51:38) indicate that the *ארי* itself is older than the *כפיר* and *גור*.⁷⁸ Indeed, the parallelism of Jer 51:38 demonstrates that the *גור ארי* is synonymous with *כפיר*. The strange compound in Judg 14:5 may say more about *כפיר* than *ארי*, but in any event shows that the *אריות* were

⁷⁵ See Gerald L. Mattingly, “Ariel (Person),” *ABD* 1:377; W. Harold Mare, “Ariel (Place),” *ABD* 1:377–78; and, further, Excursus 1: Ariel.

⁷⁶ So, e.g., BDB 72. Just as possible is “God/El is a lion.”

⁷⁷ See further Excursus 1: Ariel.

⁷⁸ Cf. *TLOT* 1:170: the term “indicates the grown (male or female) lion.” While correct on the lion’s age, there is little evidence to support the statement that *ארי* refers to female lions (see §11 above). Zoologically, of course, lion groups comprise both genders, and such a situation is masked by Hebrew plural forms which can only reflect one.

a larger group within which the כפיר could and did belong and operate (so also Ezek 19:6). Perhaps at Judg 14:5, then, it would not be too far afield to translate אריית כפיר as “a young lion of/from (the) lion pride” or the like.

Other proposals regarding ארי are not unlike those already noted with regard to אריה. Indeed, given their close (and vexed) relationship, the two terms are often treated together in the literature. Whatever the case, the objections raised to Koehler’s interpretation of ארי and אריה as African loanwords designating the African lion, and to Jastrow’s derivation of both from I ארה* so that they mean “the light-colored lion” should be recalled here. The latter remains tantalizing; the former must be discounted in light of the evidence regarding לביא (see below).

כפיר

1. Frequency, Location, and Instances

This term appears 31 times: Judg 14:5; Isa 5:29, 11:6, 31:4; Jer 2:15, 25:38, 51:38; Ezek 19:2, 3, 5, 6, 32:2, 38:13, 41:19; Hos 5:14; Amos 3:4; Micah 5:7; Nah 2:12, 14; Zech 11:3; Ps 17:12, 34:11, 35:17, 58:7, 91:13, 104:21; Prov 19:12, 20:2, 28:1; Job 4:10, 38:39.

2. Comments on Morphology, Gender, etc.

כפיר is a masculine noun that, like ארי, frequently appears in the plural. Also like ארי, כפיר is attested in two plural forms—both of these, however, are morphologically masculine. The difference between the two is merely one of full vs. defective writing (i.e., כפירים and כפירים). A feminine form is possibly preserved, but only in the GN כפירה (see §6 below).

3. Semitic Cognates

כפיר is often understood to be a “young lion,” sometimes due to its possible relationship with Arabic *jafr*, which designates a lamb and perhaps by extension any young animal.⁷⁹ Kaplan has noted, however, that the phonological shift from *j* to *k* in initial position, at least in this case, is unwarranted.⁸⁰ With the Arabic removed from consideration, few cognates present themselves. There is the Phoenician PN *kpr*, which Benz says “[c]orresponds” to Hebrew כפיר,⁸¹ but this has not gone unchallenged.⁸² The

⁷⁹ First suggested by Josua Blau, “Etymologische Untersuchungen auf Grund des palaestinischen Arabisch,” *VT* 5 (1955): 342: “*ḡafr*...im klassischen arabisch vier Monate altes Lamm...*ḡafr ilghazl* junge Gazelle. Das Wort bedeutete ursprünglich wohl ‘junges Tier’, vergleiche *g-r*.” *TDOT*, 1:376 follows Blau. See also Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 191 and n. 187; 257.

⁸⁰ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 51.

⁸¹ Frank L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions: A Catalog, Grammatical Study and Glossary of Elements* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972), 334,

inscriptions of Panammuwa twice contain the word *kpyry*,⁸³ which has generally been interpreted as a term denoting “villages”⁸⁴—especially in Panammuwa I (*KAI* #214).⁸⁵ Kaplan argues that *kpyry* in Panammuwa II (*KAI* #215) line 10, however, has been misread and that, subsequently, the “village” interpretation is mistaken.⁸⁶ He transcribes and translates the line as follows: *sm.mt.bly.kpyrn.wbly.rkb*, “he appointed men as masters of *kpyrn* and as masters of chariotry.”⁸⁷ Kaplan then takes *kpyrn* as the plural form of *kpyr* in Old Aramaic, but understands it to mean something like “warrior(s),” primarily because of Tur-Sinai’s argument that כפיר is a by-form of the word כביר meaning “mighty” or the like.⁸⁸ This suggestion will be discussed further below (§7); here it is enough to lift up this one possible—but uncertain—instance of כפיר in Old Aramaic.

4. Versions

The LXX translates כפיר with six different terms: λέων (19 times), σκύμνος (seven times), δράκων (Job 4:10, 38:39), κώμη (Ezek 38:13),⁸⁹ σκύμνος λέοντος (Isa 5:29), and πλούσιος (Ps 34:11). The Targum uses eight terms: אריא (Judg 14:5; Isa 11:6; Jer 51:38; Ezek 41:19; Ps 91:13; Prov 19:12, 20:2, 28:1; Job 38:39); בר אריון (“son of lions” = “lion cub”; Isa 5:29, 31:4; Hos 5:14; Amos 3:4; Zech 11:3; Ps 34:11, 35:17, 58:7, 104:21); מלכא (“king”; Jer 2:15, 25:38;

see also 132. Elsewhere, however, Benz is somewhat less certain: “KPR ‘Young Lion’?” (239).

⁸² Todd K. Sanders (“‘Young Lion’ or ‘He Forgives’?: A Note on the Name *KPR*,” *AUSS* 29 [1991]: 71–72) has argued that the name is actually “a *D*-stem verbal hypocoristicon, /*kippir*/, meaning ‘He forgives’” (71). He compares three other Taymanite inscriptions that read either *kfr* (“El forgives”) or *ʾlmkfr* (“ʿalm forgives”) and concludes: “Thus, ‘He forgives’ may be the more reasonable rendition for *KPR*” (72). However, Scott C. Layton, “The Phoenician Name *KPR*: ‘Young Lion’ or ‘He Forgives’?: A Rejoinder,” *AUSS* 31 (1993): 53–56 has demonstrated that Sanders’ opinion is unlikely and that “it is preferable to classify the Phoenician personal name *kpr* as an animal name and to translate ‘young lion’” (56).

⁸³ *KAI* #214 line 10 (Panammuwa I) and #215 (Panammuwa II) line 10 (1:38 and 1:40, respectively).

⁸⁴ See *KAI* 2:218, 227; 3:35; also *TSSI* 2:78–79, 84. *DNWSI* 1:530 does include as possible “young lion > warrior??” for *KAI* #214 (or, à la Landsberger, “lion statues [at gate]”) and, for *KAI* #215, “poss[ibly] = young lions > warriors... *bly kpyry* = certain type of deity, the lords of the young lions, less prob[able] interpret[ation].”

⁸⁵ So also Sefire III lines 23 and 26: וכפריה “and its villages.” For the text and translation see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (rev. ed.; BibOr 19/A; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995), 140–41 (so also *TSSI* 2:50–51, 55–56). Fitzmyer also lists Hadad 10 (*ibid.*, 159; so also *TSSI* 2:66, 71) and compares 4QpNah (4Q169) frgs. 3–4 1.9–11 where וכפריה is parallel to [ריבכ]ה (*ibid.*, 160).

⁸⁶ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 51–52, 215 n. 13.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 51–52.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁸⁹ Also at Neh 6:2. See under PNs and GNs (§6) below.

Ezek 19:3, 5, 6, 38:13); לִיחָא (“lion”; Mic 5:7; Job 4:10); שְׁלִטְנָא (“ruler”; Ezek 19:2; Nah 2:12); שְׁחָלָא (“lion”; Ps 17:12); תְּקִיף (“strong”; Ezek 32:2); כְּפַרְנָא (“village”; Nah 2:14). Five different terms are found in the Vulgate: *leo* (17 times); *catulus leonis* (“lion’s cub”; Isa 5:29, 31:4; Hos 5:14; Amos 3:4; Micah 5:7; Nah 2:12; Ps 17:12, 104:21; Job 4:10); *leunculus* (Ezek 19:2; Nah 2:14); *catulus* (“cub”; Judg 14:5; Job 38:39); *dives* (“rich”; Ps 34:11).

5. כפיר with Other Lion Terms

כפיר occurs with many of the other lion terms in Job 4:10–11 and Nah 2:12–13 (see §§7.1–2 under ארי/אריה above). In Job 4:10, for instance, it occurs in parallel with אריה and שחל; 4:11 contains the further lion terms ליש and בני לביא. In Nah 2:12–13, כפיר is parallel to ארי; also present in this context are אריה, לביא (masculine and feminine), גור, and גור אריה. גור אריה is the most common parallel term with כפיר—in addition to Job 4:10, the two are found in parallel at Isa 31:4; Amos 3:4; Micah 5:7; and Ps 17:12.⁹⁰ לביא is the parallel in Job 38:39 (though the parallelism there is clearly not synonymous) and Isa 5:29. The feminine form לִבְיָא occurs with כפיר in Ezek 19:2. In addition to Nah 2:12, ארי is found with כפיר in Ezek 19:2 and 19:6. In the former text, the כפירים comprise a larger group of some sort within which the לִבְיָא laid down and raised her cubs (גוריה). In the latter text, it is the cub-become-כפיר that moves within the larger group of ארייות. Two important texts demonstrate that the כפיר is not to be simply equated with the ארי, however. Judg 14:5, with its unique phrase כפיר ארייות, has already been discussed. Jer 51:38 has also been mentioned; it is this text that indicates that גורי ארייות is the synonymous parallel term for כפ(י)רים.⁹¹ In addition to several of the passages already treated, גור also occurs with כפיר in Ezek 19:3 and 19:5. In both instances, the mother lion takes a cub (גור) and makes it into (or it becomes) a כפיר. Lastly, כפיר is found in parallel with שחל in Hos 5:14; Ps 91:13; and the already-mentioned Job 4:10.⁹²

6. PNs and GNs

There are two GNs that might relate to כפיר. The first is found in Neh 6:2 in the form בְּכַפִּירִים. Without the prepositional prefix, if the MT is pointed correctly, the GN would be הַכַּפִּירִים. The LXX connected this phrase with כפר “open village” and translated accordingly (κῶμαι), as did the Vulgate

⁹⁰ As already noted, Kaplan makes אריה/כפיר a fixed word pair (see “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 75), but the statistical breakdown regarding כפיר is no more impressive than it was for אריה (5 of 17 vs. 3 of 17).

⁹¹ So also James Allen Rimbach, “Animal Imagery in the Old Testament: Some Aspects of Hebrew Poetics” (Ph.D. diss.; The Johns Hopkins University, 1972), 159 who places this text under a discussion of passages where “two words are used which are alternate designations for the same animal.”

⁹² Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 73–75, 77 has demonstrated that כפיר is primarily a B-word in parallel structures.

(*viculis*).⁹³ Many commentators, lexica, and translations agree.⁹⁴ But, as Kaplan has observed, a plural form (“villages”) does not make much sense in the context.⁹⁵ Kaplan also wants to argue against a GN because he believes such an interpretation invents “a place whose existence is attested nowhere else in the Bible, and whose archaeological remains have not been located.”⁹⁶ However, in the light of the difficulties besetting site identification, the limitations of archaeological knowledge, and so forth, these can hardly be seen as serious objections.⁹⁷ Does every important, or better (in this case) unimportant, site in ancient Israel/Palestine appear in the Bible? Telling in this regard is Kaplan’s desire to relate Neh 6:2 to his forced interpretation of כפיר as “mighty one.” To do so, he eliminates the GN interpretation and follows Schiemann who has tied this passage to some sort of covenanting process involving “princes,” with בכפירים assuming this meaning.⁹⁸ Schiemann’s interpretation of Neh 6:2 has been generally dismissed.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, given the widespread use of animal names in metaphorical senses or as titles in the Semitic world, such a judgment should not be rushed.¹⁰⁰ And yet, a GN does suit the literary context, and other GNs are attested that relate to other lion terms. One might mention here evidence such as the GN כפירה (= Tell Kefireh) or the two Amarna Letters written by a/the “lady of the lions” (NIN-UR.MAœ.MEŠ: EA 273:4, 274:4), apparently from a place near Aijalon (see Chaper 2 §2.2.4.2 and Chapter 3 §3.7).¹⁰¹ Hence, כפירים (ה) could be a GN “(the) young lions,” named, perhaps, due to the sighting of such animals in that vicinity at some point in hoary antiquity.

The GN כפירה is found in Josh 9:17, 18:26; Ezra 2:25; and Neh 7:29.¹⁰² Many scholars relate the name to כפר “open village,” and this may well be the simplest explanation of its meaning and derivation. Still, some have argued for

⁹³ Cf., similarly, the LXX at Ezek 38:13, but the Vulgate reads *leo*.

⁹⁴ See, e.g., BDB 499; cf. *HALOT* 2:493.

⁹⁵ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 67–68. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 267 has observed that while the LXX and the Vulgate appear to have read “villages” for MT, “we would then expect ‘*in one of the villages*’” (italics mine).

⁹⁶ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 67.

⁹⁷ See J. M. Miller, “Site Identification: A Problem Area in Contemporary Biblical Scholarship,” *ZDPV* 99 (1983): 119–29.

⁹⁸ See Richard Schiemann, “Covenanting with the Princes: Neh. VI 2,” *VT* 17 (1967): 367–69. Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 67–68 takes the כ as the *beth* of accompaniment so that “Sanballat suggests to Nehemiah that they confer in the Ono Valley accompanied by high-ranking military and/or political advisors, i.e., כפירים.”

⁹⁹ See, e.g., F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 200; and H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco: Word, 1985), 248 n. 2.a.

¹⁰⁰ See Miller, “Animal Names,” 177–86.

¹⁰¹ Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 267.

¹⁰² The term is articular in Joshua, anarthrous in Ezra-Nehemiah.

a connection between the GN כפירה and the כפירים of Neh 6:2.¹⁰³ Such a connection could function in a number of ways: First, it might indicate that Neh 6:2 is referring to the same locality known elsewhere as כפירה. This option is unlikely from a geographical perspective as the two localities refer to sites in different regions.¹⁰⁴ Second, a connection between these words might indicate that כפירים in Neh 6:2 is also to be related to כפר “village.” As already indicated, such an interpretation is not ideal in the case of Neh 6:2, though it cannot be ruled out completely, especially with regard to the etymological derivation of כפירה. Third, a connection might indicate that כפירה, like כפירים is to be related to כפיר, a type of lion. While this must remain uncertain, it is nevertheless a possibility, especially in light of EA 273 and 274. If so, it would be a feminine form—literally, “young lioness.”¹⁰⁵

As for PNs, one might note *kprh* in Arad 60.1,¹⁰⁶ and the PN *kpr* in a few of the seals discussed in Chapters 3–4 (figs. 3.159, 4.187–188)—not all of which are Hebrew in provenance.

7. Discussion

The information on כפיר is somewhat more productive than that encountered thus far for the other lion terms. Three texts, in particular, provide important information on what type of lion the כפיר is. The first is Judg 14:5 where a כפיר אריות is found in combat with Samson. This text has already been discussed. It bears repeating, however, that the construct phrase demonstrates that the singular כפיר is distinct from the plural group (or pride?) of אריות.¹⁰⁷ Jer 51:38 adds further data by putting כפירים in parallel with גורי אריות, גור, as already noted, is the typical term for “cub.” Here, then, the כפיר is distinct from ארי not only in number, but in kind, being more similar to a גור ארי. Still, caution is warranted as the parallelism, while synonymous, may not indicate

¹⁰³ E.g., *DCH* 4:454.

¹⁰⁴ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 67 notes that כפירים cannot be the same as כפירה, largely because the former is in the Ono Valley (in the lowlands northwest of Jerusalem near Lod), but the latter is in the highlands in what was formerly Gibeonite territory. So, similarly, Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 254–55. Cf. further Map 2.3.

¹⁰⁵ See Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 71. But, in light of his etymological work, Kaplan thinks the GN could mean “mighty.” He compares GN Rabbah “great” (Josh 15:60, etc.).

¹⁰⁶ See Sandra Landis Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew* (SBLRBS 23; Atlanta: Scholars, 1998), 399. The last three letters are uncertain and a much different reading is given in G. I. Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions: Corpus and Concordance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 29 (2.060).

¹⁰⁷ Lipiński, “Lion and Lioness,” 219 has attempted to tie כפיר to Cushitic *kabil* (“leopard”) and thinks it possible that some biblical instances of the term “refer in reality to the leopard. This would explain the need of specifying in Judg. 14,5 that the animal is a *כפיר אריות*.” While possible, such an interpretation is hardly necessary, especially in light of the obvious distinction (lexical and semantic) between ארי and כפיר and the preceding discussion of this phrase (see §17 under ארי/אריה above).

that the terms are identical. Moreover, כפיר is found in parallel with a number of other terms lion, including especially אריה and שחל. The כפיר, that is, is not necessarily a גור. The third text clinches this point and adds further insight. In the extended lion metaphor in Ezek 19:1–9, we find that the lioness rears one of her cubs (גוריה) to become a כפיר and that this כפיר moves among the אריות and learns how to hunt, catch prey, and so forth. One might well wonder how accurate a zoological presentation of ancient fauna Ezekiel 19 actually is, especially as this information is found within an extended metaphor and the (non-lion) referent of the metaphor could well be impacting the metaphorical presentation (see further Chapter 5 §5.3.2). Be that as it may, nothing in the naturalistic aspects of the metaphor contradicts known zoological data. Whatever the case, Ezekiel 19 provides some firm evidence that the כפיר represents something of a transitional state in lion-age and development. A כפיר is older than a גור but not yet an ארי.¹⁰⁸ The traditional translation “young lion” is thus altogether satisfactory for כפיר.¹⁰⁹ Beyond this, little more can be said, and thus speculative statements on details regarding the כפיר should be viewed with suspicion.¹¹⁰

Finally, further comment on Kaplan’s work is necessary. He has argued that a leonine interpretation for כפיר “cannot be sustained” for all the verses wherein the term appears.¹¹¹ He follows Tur-Sinai in relating כפיר to כביר (from the root כבר) and argues that Hebrew and Old Aramaic כפיר mean “mighty one” or the like, which is equally applicable to warriors (as in Panammuwa II line 10) or lions. But several objections must be raised against

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Rimbach, “Animal Imagery,” 83, 161 who makes the same point with אריה.

¹⁰⁹ So, e.g., *TDOT* 1:376; *HALOT* 2:493; *TLOT*, 1:171: “the young lion already hunting independently”; BDB 498: “it differs from whelp...as old enough to hunt its prey.” *Contra TWOT*, 1:453: “That the word specifies the age of the lion is doubtful.” Note also Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* (CC; Minneapolis: 1991), 480 who points out that כפיר is mentioned with the calf in Isa 11:6—further contextual data that “the word is not used to designate a mature animal.”

¹¹⁰ E.g., the assertion that “[o]riginally *kephir* meant a ‘young animal,’” and only secondarily a young lion “who goes out on his own in search of prey” (*TDOT*, 1:376) is not demonstrable. Similarly, *HALOT* 2:493 states that the כפיר is “distinguishable by his mane” but this too is not clear and can only be sustained if כפיר is closely connected to the root כפר “covered.” Kaplan has pointed out that suggestions which posit that a כפיר is “either one covered by [a] mane or a ‘concealed one (i.e. a tricky prowler),” are “far-fetched” (“The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 51). A similar judgment should be passed on Dahood’s opinion that כפיר means “tawny lion” largely on the basis of Eblaite *kā-pā-lu* (or *kā-pā-ru*) “copper” (Mitchell Dahood, “Love and Death at Ebla and Their Biblical Reflections,” in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* [ed. J. H. Marks and R. M. Good; Guilford, CT: Four Quarters, 1987], 95; followed recently in *DCH* 4:453). Dahood goes on to posit that Ezek 38:13 might be calling the merchants “tawny lions” because of the “color common to the copper currency and to the lions” (95 n. 26). Obviously, the meager evidence supporting this speculation renders it highly dubious.

¹¹¹ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 50.

this argument: First, it should be pointed out that while the *b/p* interchange is altogether possible, the entire philological argument rests on little data. Right from the start, for instance, Kaplan has to argue that the term in Panammuwa II is actually *kpyrn* not *kpyry*—that is to say, the reading is not entirely clear or beyond debate, with most epigraphers reading *kpyry* against Kaplan.¹¹² A more serious problem is that Kaplan's interpretation of כָּבֵר as "mighty" is true of, and primarily limited to, PNs.¹¹³ In short, then, Kaplan's logic in arguing that this one, uncertain instance of כָּבֵר in an Old Aramaic inscription designates a warrior of some sort and that this, in turn, establishes the existence of a root that somehow spawns two different meanings for כָּבֵר (namely, "lion" and "warrior") is rather stretched. The philological argument is neither particularly strong nor sound. In fact, the exact opposite seems to be the case, and this can be argued rather easily from the common Semitic practice of metaphorically using animal names as military designations.¹¹⁴ Although Kaplan is aware of this practice and cites Miller's work elsewhere,¹¹⁵ he does not seem to have considered it with reference to Panammuwa II. However, it follows that if כָּבֵר is used in metaphorical fashion elsewhere in the Semitic world, then it is certainly possible (and perhaps not surprising) that one might find a similar use in an Aramaic inscription, even if Panammuwa II predates most of the metaphorical instances of כָּבֵר in the Hebrew Bible.¹¹⁶ In sum, Kaplan's assertion that the basic meaning of כָּבֵר is not "lion," because it "refers to people in more than half of the verses in which it is found";¹¹⁷ along with his decision to define the term as "mighty one," since "might is a quality common to both lions and soldiers,"¹¹⁸ are both mistaken. His assessment of instances of כָּבֵר that are ambiguous¹¹⁹ are such because of metaphorical appellation not etymological derivation.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, even though Kaplan is incorrect on this latter point, his work is still quite helpful insofar as it underscores the fact that כָּבֵר is frequently employed in metaphorical constructions.

¹¹² It is given as *kpyry* (the final *yodh* is uncertain) in both *KAI* and *TSSI*. Again, note the related (debatable but so *TSSI* 2:71) term *kpyrh* in Sefire III lines 23 and 26 and Panammuwa I line 10. See *DNWSI* 1:530.

¹¹³ A point he himself acknowledges (Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible," 216 n. 19). But see *DNWSI* 1:486–87 for substantival usages of *kbr*₂.

¹¹⁴ The classic overview remains Miller, "Animal Names," 177–86.

¹¹⁵ E.g., Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible," 219 n. 66.

¹¹⁶ *KAI*, 2:223 dates Panammuwa II to the "2. Hälfte des 8. Jh.s. v. Chr. (zwischen 733/32 und 727)." One of the clearest titular instances of כָּבֵר in the Hebrew Bible is Ezek 38:13. See also Nah 2:14 and perhaps Ezek 32:2.

¹¹⁷ Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible," 71.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 52–53.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 58–64.

¹²⁰ This can be supported further by looking to the semantic domain of lion imagery—especially that used with כָּבֵר (see Appendix 2). Cf. also Miller, "Animal Names," 183 on emendations of כָּבֵר in Nah 2:14. He writes that there is no need to emend to "your warriors," because "[t]he word already means that."

לְבִיָּא

1. Frequency, Location, and Instances

This term occurs 14 times: Gen 49:9; Num 23:24, 24:9; Deut 33:20; Isa 5:29, 30:6; Ezek 19:2; Hos 13:8; Joel 1:6; Nah 2:12, 13; Job 4:11, 38:39; Ps 57:5.

2. Comments on Morphology, Gender, etc.

Morphologically, לְבִיָּא is a masculine singular noun; the (defective) masculine plural is attested once in Ps 57:5: לְבָאִים.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the gender of לְבִיָּא is not as simple as it might at first seem. As early as the Vulgate (see §5 below), לְבִיָּא has been understood as denoting a female animal—i.e., a lioness. Some lexica list both masculine and feminine genders as possible,¹²² but others provide only the feminine “lioness” as the basic translation equivalent.¹²³ As the gender issue is the most vexed question relating to the correct translation and interpretation of לְבִיָּא, further information relating to it can be found below under §§3, 6, and 8. In this section, however, it is important to highlight two issues, morphology and syntax, and see how each bears on the matter of gender.

2.1. Morphology. Although the masculine plural is attested only once, and then defectively (Ps 57:5), the masculine gender of לְבִיָּא is further demonstrated by two instances of feminine forms—the singular לְבִיָּא in Ezek 19:2 and the plural (with suffix and preposition) in Nah 2:13: לְלִבְאֵתֵי. Some scholars have thought the former to be a secondarily-derived feminine form, as the feminine of לְבִיָּא would, theoretically, be לְבִיָּאָה;¹²⁴ Ezek 19:2 is therefore simply wrong.¹²⁵ Kaplan, however, has

¹²¹ The pointing is odd, leading one to postulate a base form *לְבָאִ. So Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 296; HALOT 2:515; W. F. Albright, “Two Little Understood Amarna Letters from the Middle Jordan Valley,” *BASOR* 89 (1943): 16 n. 51a; idem, “The Oracles of Balaam,” *JBL* 68 (1944): 218 n. 75; B–L 579 n. 1; Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51–100* (AB 17; New York: Doubleday, 1967), 52; and *DCH* 4:505. The lexical form *לְבָאִ is, of course, unattested. While grammatical rules may at times necessitate the postulation of such forms, it is often advisable to restrict grammar to the descriptive realm. With only one plural attestation, that is, it is at least possible that the form in MT is in error. I.e., one would expect לְבִיָּאִים, or, if defective לְבָאִים, in which case the difference is just one vowel. See also the feminine defective plural in Nah 2:13 discussed below (§2.1), which might suggest masculine plural לְבָאִים; defective לְבָאִים.

¹²² So BDB 522.

¹²³ So HALOT 2:517.

¹²⁴ See, e.g., HALOT 2:517. See further Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 1:388 n. 2a, who states that the MT is “an artificial secondary vocalization...which wants to bring out the feminine gender clearly and which should properly be לְבִיָּאָה.” The LXX, Lat^s, Syriac, and Targum “felt no need to make clear the feminine element in their

attempted to argue that לְבִיָּא is “the morphologically feminine counterpart” of לְבִיא, coming from the same “pan-Semitic /*lb*/ root.”¹²⁶ He goes on to note that the secondarily-feminine argument posits that the א- ending is from late Aramaic influence, but in so doing invents a root *לְבִי, “lion,” which is otherwise unattested in any of the other Semitic languages.¹²⁷ According to Kaplan, then, “if לְבִיא meant ‘lioness,’ the form לְבִיָּא would not have evolved to signify ‘lioness.’”¹²⁸ While the unaugmented form לְבִיָּא remains difficult, a stronger case might be made for Nah 2:13, which provides clearer evidence of a feminine plural form for לְבִיא, while at the same time not definitively disproving the admittedly difficult morphology of the feminine singular form in Ezek 19:2.¹²⁹ Finally, mention should be made of the GNs לְבָאוֹת and בֵּית לְבָאוֹת, which attest a morphologically feminine plural form of לְבִיא (see further §7 below).

2.2. *Syntax*. The morphological argument is strengthened by looking at the syntactical constructions used with לְבִיא. לְבִיא typically occurs with masculine verbs, adjectives, participles, and the like. In the case of some contexts, however, it might be argued that the masculine forms apply to the masculine referent(s) of the metaphors.¹³⁰ While this is possible, other contexts prove the opposite. For example, Ps 57:5 uses a masculine plural participle (לְהִטִּים) and two masculine plural suffixes (וּלְשׁוֹנִים, שְׁנִיִּים) to refer back to the masculine plural לְבָאִים.¹³¹ Conversely, but also demonstrating the grammatical gender, the context of Ezekiel 19 consistently employs feminine forms with reference to the לְבִיָּא of 19:2.

In sum, then, לְבִיא—on the basis of the morphological and syntactical evidence—is a masculine singular noun that also appears in the masculine

translation.” Zimmerli goes on to compare, however, LXX^{Qmg, L, V}, Theodoret’s *λέαινα*, and the Vulgate’s *leaena*, all of which seem to grant the opposite conclusion.

125 B–L §62x (p. 511): “vielleicht לְבִיא zu lesen”; GKC §80h (p. 224): “unless לְבִיא is intended.”

126 Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 92.

127 Ibid., 224–25 n. 48. Cf. also note 121 above.

128 Ibid., 92.

129 I.e., the feminine singular vocalization (again, attested only once in Biblical Hebrew) could well be secondary—an attempt to make clear that the referent is in fact female despite the fact that the unvocalized and unaugmented form is morphologically masculine. See note 124 above.

130 E.g., Gen 49:9; Num 23:24; 24:9.

131 This imagery is not to be discounted as deriving its gender from the enemy mentioned in Ps 57:4 for three reasons: 1) 57:4 uses a singular term (שֹׂאֵפִי “the one trampling me”; though it could be a collective); 2) the plural forms introduced in 57:5 continue in 57:7; and 3) 57:5 also introduces new, previously un-encountered, imagery into the psalm.

plural (Ps 57:5), the feminine singular (Ezek 19:2), and the feminine plural (Nah 2:13). This judgment is confirmed by other, post-biblical contexts.¹³²

3. Semitic Cognates

לביא is found in post-biblical Hebrew in masculine and feminine forms: לביא and לביאה. Akkadian *labbu(m)* or *l%bu* (from *lab%u*) is attested from Old Akkadian onward.¹³³ The feminine form is *labbatu/l%batu* (“lioness”).¹³⁴ Preserved in Akkadian, but probably reflecting Canaanite is the PN Labaya, found in the Amarna Letters.¹³⁵ Arrowheads have been found in Canaan bearing the PN *l%bd/l%bt* “Servant of the Lioness (Goddess?).”¹³⁶ Ugaritic preserves *ibu* and *ibim*, as well as the PNs *lbiy*, *l%bdlbit*,¹³⁷ and *šmlbi*.¹³⁸ Phoenician preserves *lby/t* in several PNs, but these apparently mean, in the main, “Libyan.”¹³⁹ One Punic PN *l%b* (CIS 147.5) may mean “lion” but Benz observes that it could also be “a variant writing of the gentilic -y ending” and thus still mean “Libyan.”¹⁴⁰ Arabic preserves masculine and feminine cognates (*labu*, *labulat*, *lubwa*, *labwatur*)¹⁴¹ as does Old South Arabian (*l%b*). Similar cognates exist in Aramaic and other languages.¹⁴² The force of this evidence serves to underscore the meaning of “lion” for לביא, and to demonstrate that this meaning and this term are widely attested throughout the ancient Near East.¹⁴³

¹³² E.g., לביא is syntactically and morphologically masculine in 1QH 13.7 (לביאים). Cf. further *b. Sanh.* 106a where the discussion of two lions (לביא and לביאה) copulating clearly indicates that לביא (unaugmented) is a male lion (Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 91). The latter example also shows that expected feminine forms of the word do occur in post-biblical Hebrew (see Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:689), though they differ from Ezek 19:2. See, e.g., 4QpNah (4Q169) frgs. 3–4 1.4 (= Nah 2:13).

¹³³ *AHW* 1:526.

¹³⁴ But note B. Landsberger, *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamien nach der 14. Tafel der Serie æAR-RA = æUBULLU* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934), 76 who argued that “*nēšu* ist ursprünglich der männliche, *l%bu* der weibliche Löwe” and that this is “schon ursemitisch.” In his opinion, “lion” and “lioness” seem to have been originally **nai* and **lab*, respectively; Akkadian preserved the distinction and the original masculine form (*ibid.*, 76 n. 7).

¹³⁵ See Albright, “Two Little Understood Amarna Letters,” 16 n. 51a; further Chapter 3 (§3.7).

¹³⁶ *KAI* #21 (see 1:4, 2:29, 3:Tafel I); *HALOT* 2:515; J. T. Milik and Frank M. Cross, Jr. “Inscribed Javelin-Heads from the Period of the Judges: A Recent Discovery in Palestine,” *BASOR* 134 (1954): 5–15. See further Chapter 3 (§3.7).

¹³⁷ *l%bdlbit qšt* in *KTU* 4.63 III 38 (an administrative list of archers).

¹³⁸ See *UT* 426 (#1347) and *CPU* 2:1219.

¹³⁹ Benz, *Personal Names*, 337.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 338, see also 133.

¹⁴¹ See Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 83; Lane, *Lexicon*, 7:2644.

¹⁴² See *TDOT* 1:376–377; Lipiński, “Lion and Lioness,” 214–17.

¹⁴³ Casting further light, perhaps, on לביא is the possibility that Akkadian *lab%bu*, “to rage” (*CAD* L, 7), could well be a denominative from *labbu/l%bu*. Cf. also Akkadian *labbibu* (the name of a dagger; *CAD* L, 23; *AHW* 1:524) and *labbu* “raging” (*CAD* L, 24). The

4. Non-Semitic Cognates

Glück's study, already mentioned above, deserves additional comment here insofar as it impinges on לביא and possible Egyptian cognates. Glück's attempt to connect לביא to the same Proto-Semitic root as אריה/ארי and to connect these, in turn, to Mycenaean *re-wo* is less convincing in the case of לביא. While Glück argues that this relationship cannot be "disproved,"¹⁴⁴ and that may be true, one could reply that his theory is not necessarily to be endorsed either, especially as some of the consonantal and phonological shifts required to make the argument, while possible, are rare. In brief: Glück's position, while possible, is not likely and has not convinced many scholars.

Glück and Lipiński entertain another Egyptian cognate for לביא, however: *rw-ḥw* "lion."¹⁴⁵ For his part, Glück is less sanguine here: while "[t]his may be an attractive suggestion with which to explain the origin of the word...it is neither the only one nor perhaps the likeliest suggestion."¹⁴⁶ Be that as it may, both Glück and Kaplan have argued that the existence of *rw-ḥw* eliminate Coptic *laboi/labai* ("lioness") from consideration as a cognate of Hebrew לביא; the Coptic is actually cognate with the Egyptian (cf. Demotic */by*), not the Hebrew, term.¹⁴⁷ Coptic *laboi/labai*, therefore, may not be related etymologically at all to Hebrew לביא—at least, not in any direct, genetic fashion—and "certainly offers no evidence to the effect that לביא means 'lioness.'"¹⁴⁸

problem hangs somewhat on whether the second *b* is original to the form *labbu*, meaning "lion." Landsberger, *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamien*, 76 n. 6 thinks not (so also CAD L, 24), but Lewis, among others, has postulated the following development: *labbu* < *l%bu* < *labbu* (Theodore J. Lewis, "CT 13.33–34 and Ezekiel 32: Lion-Dragon Myths," *JAOS* 116 [1996]: 37 n. 65). He concludes that the best philological relationship is nevertheless via folk etymology: "Most likely through folk etymology, the verb 'to rage' was connected with the lion, the animal best known for raging" (ibid., 37–38). It is worth noting that these raging terms are used with leonine figures (e.g., Anzû), in metaphorical passages with the king as lion (e.g., Sennacherib), and with other leonine vocabulary (e.g., *labbiš*).

¹⁴⁴ Note his conclusion: "On the evidence of words of early Egyptian and Mycenaean and their etymological examination it cannot be disproved that...[ארי and לביא] do indeed represent early dialectic differences of only one original word....In light of the above we are compelled to accept the possibility that the above two Hebrew words emanate from one [P]ro[to]-Semitic word" (Glück, "𐤁𐤏𐤁 and *lavil*," 235).

¹⁴⁵ Glück, "𐤁𐤏𐤁 and *lavil*," 235; Lipiński, "Lion and Lioness," 214–15. The latter also includes Egyptian *ḥby*.

¹⁴⁶ Glück, "𐤁𐤏𐤁 and *lavil*," 235.

¹⁴⁷ See ibid., 232–35; Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible," 82. This is *contra* scholars such as Albright, "The Oracles of Balaam," 218 n. 75. For the Demotic, see Lipiński, "Lion and Lioness," 214–15, who connects it with the Coptic, Egyptian, and Hebrew terms.

¹⁴⁸ Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible," 82; again, *contra* the perspective of Albright and others.

Lastly, many scholars have argued that Greek λέων is a Semitic loan from לביא.¹⁴⁹

5. Versions

The LXX uses three terms to translate לביא: σκύμνος (seven times), λέων (Deut 33:20; Isa 5:29, 30:6; Nah 2:13; Job 4:11, 38:39); τοῦ ἐισελεῖν (once at Nah 2:12).¹⁵⁰ The Targum also uses three terms: ליהא (seven times); אריא (Isa 5:29, 30:6); בר אריין (Joel 1:6); בן אריה (Hos 13:8).¹⁵¹ The Vulgate employs four different terms: *leaena* (seven times); *leo* (Deut 33:20; Isa 5:29; Hos 13:8; Job 4:11); *catulus leonis* (Joel 1:6; Ps 57:5); *ut ingrederetur* (“enter”; once at Nah 2:12).

6. לביא with Other Lion Terms

לביא is found with all of the other lion terms—שחל, כפיר, אריה, ארי, גור, and ליש—in Job 4:10–11 and Nah 2:12–13 (see §§7.1–2 under אריה/ארי above). Unfortunately, these instances provide little insight into the nature of the לביא. More fruitful are passages that set לביא in close relationship with another lion term or group of terms. לביא is found in parallel with ליש in Isa 30:6; בני לביא is parallel to ליש in Job 4:11. The typical term for lion cubs is גור אריה, but לביא appears to take בן, though with only one example of the latter this cannot be certain.¹⁵² גור אריה is found with לביא in Nah 2:12, where it is parallel with the asyndetic phrase לביא אריה,¹⁵³ and in Gen 49:9, which also contains אריה followed closely (and paralleled) by לביא.¹⁵⁴ אריה is the parallel in Joel 1:6 as well. Other texts containing other parallel terms include: Num 23:24, 24:9 (ארי) and Isa 5:29; Job 38:39 (כפיר).

לביא is found, therefore, in parallel with most of the lion terms. This data has bearing on the discussion of gender insofar as it provides further indication that לביא denotes a masculine lion. Two important exceptions to this rule must be immediately noted—Ezek 19:2 and Nah 2:13—each of which shed light on the nature of the female לביא, and which, proverbially, prove the rule. Both

¹⁴⁹ See, e.g., *TDNT*, 4:251 n. 1: “there is a connection with the Heb. לביא, Assyr. labbu”; and *TWOT*, 1:466: “possibly the source of Greek *leon*.” Cf., however, LSJ, 1043, which does not make the connection.

¹⁵⁰ Perhaps an error in LXX (reading לבוא for לביא), though many scholars emend to follow the LXX. The MT, however, is the more difficult reading. See Appendix 3.

¹⁵¹ The Targum of Nah 2:12 is very free: it may contain a minus or, if not, it apparently read MT’s לביא as an H stem from בוא שבקין (“left”). Nah 2:13 is similar—it apparently translated with נשיהון (“their consorts”).

¹⁵² This text might be appealed to as further evidence that לביא, unless otherwise indicated grammatically, is a male lion as the גור is a suckling in Lam 4:3. But גור is used with the masculine אריה in Nah 2:13, so this cannot be conclusive.

¹⁵³ This could be an alternative reading, however, or an error; it is frequently emended (see Appendix 3).

¹⁵⁴ This might be used as further evidence against emending Nah 2:12.

passages contain feminine forms of לְבִיָּא. In Ezek 19:2, it is the female lioness who raises her cubs among אֲרִיּוֹת and כַּפִּירִים. The female לְבִיָּא, that is, is not a young lion, but is old enough to bear and rear cubs.¹⁵⁵ In Nah 2:13, the male אֲרִי is the provider of food for “his cubs” (indicating some involvement in rearing) and “his lionesses.” Zoologically, while female lions take part—and oftentimes the primary role—in the hunt, the plural form is interesting and may reflect the fact that a pride is typically dominated by only one male lion.¹⁵⁶ Also significant here is that the parallel term נִוֵּר occurs in the feminine, matching the gender of the feminine (defective) plural לְבָאִת. ¹⁵⁷ In sum, לְבִיָּא is a term that can be used of both male and female lions (in the latter case with morphological adjustment), is often used in synonymous parallelism with other lion terms, and denotes a lion old enough to bear (if female) and raise cubs.

7. PNs and GNs

The GN לְבָאוֹת (Lebaoth; literally, “Lionesses”) is found in Josh 15:32; the full GN is apparently בֵּית לְבָאוֹת (Beth-Lebaoth; literally, “House of the Lionesses”) as in Josh 19:6.¹⁵⁸ The exact location of (Beth-)Lebaoth has not been identified, but in the Joshua texts, it is a Simeonite town located in the Judean Negeb listed between Hazar-Susah and Sharuhēn.¹⁵⁹ Further specificity is not possible. Be that as it may, the GN in both longer and shorter forms attests to a feminine form of לְבִיָּא, perhaps לְבִיָּאֵה* (see above), but attested in Biblical Hebrew only as singular לְבִיָּא (Ezek 19:2) or (defective) plural לְבָאוֹת (Nah 2:13).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Schaller’s study reports that most female lions have their first litter around the age of four years, which is still in the stage of “subadulthood” (2–3.5 to 4 years) as adulthood is 4+ years. See George B. Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion: A Study of Predator-Prey Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1972), 28–30.

¹⁵⁶ This is true even though many prides contain more than one male. Indeed, Schaller noted some variation within tribes at various times, as well as between tribes of different parks (Nairobi and Serengeti). See Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 35, 130–32.

¹⁵⁷ Only here in the Hebrew Bible. See under נִוֵּר below.

¹⁵⁸ Lipiński, “Lion and Lioness,” 217 and n. 44 wishes to read both as singular forms.

¹⁵⁹ BDB 522; HALOT 1:127, 2:515; Carl S. Ehrlich, “Beth-Lebaoth,” ABD 1:689–90. In 1 Chr 4:31, a Beth-Biri appears between Hazar-Susim and Shaaraim. Some have thought this to be a later, post-exilic name for the site known in pre-exilic times as Beth-Lebaoth. W. Rudolph has even speculated that Beth-Biri is a corruption of Beth-Ari; in this case both GNs are related to a lion term (see Ehrlich, “Beth-Lebaoth,” 1:690).

¹⁶⁰ Note also Frank Moore Cross, Jr., “The Origin and Early Evolution of the Alphabet,” EI 8 (1967): 13* n. 32, who derives the GN Lebo-hamath (לְבוֹא חַמַּת) from Hebrew and Canaanite *lablu*, the Hebrew לְבוֹא is, in his opinion, a false form “vocalized by normal Hebrew patterns when the meaning of the place name was vague or forgotten.” Traditionally, the GN has been taken to mean “entrance to Hamath” (see BDB 333; HALOT 2:515). If, however, the first term is derived from a lion root, it is unclear what its meaning might be. Perhaps “lion of Hamath (?)”; “lion enclosure (?)” (see BDB 333 for חַמַּת as “fortress, sacred enclosure, temenos,” etc.); or even “angered/enraged lion (?)” (see BDB 332; DNWSI 1:386) are possible.

No Hebrew PNs relating to לביא have survived in the Hebrew Bible. Even so, the PNs found in the Amarna Letters and the arrowheads discussed above (and in Chapter 3 §3.7) should be duly noted.

8. Discussion

Several key insights into the nature and meaning of לביא have been gleaned from the preceding sections. The לביא can designate the male lion or, in feminine forms, the female lion. In either gender, the לביא is old enough to have young (Job 4:11; Nah 2:13; Ezek 19:2). It is often parallel to other lion terms, especially of the masculine variety, and this adds further support to an interpretation that treats the unaugmented form לביא as masculine. Where comes, therefore, the long-standing tradition of translating לביא as “lioness” and viewing the morphologically-feminine forms as only late and secondarily developed?¹⁶¹

Several things appear to be at work. One is, of course, the low frequency of masculine plural, feminine singular, and feminine plural forms—each of which appear only once—and how that situation complicates analysis. A second factor may well be Landsberger’s oft-cited opinion that *l%bu* designates “der weibliche Löwe.”¹⁶² Such an opinion, and it is found in other scholars on the basis of other languages,¹⁶³ typically stems from the existence of more than one lion term in a particular language—a phenomenon that, in and of itself, need not relate to gender at all. Another factor may well be the heavy influence of Latin, especially via the Vulgate, on ecclesiastical and academic circles. That influence should not be underestimated and could be a major factor in the issue of gender.¹⁶⁴ The Vulgate uses *leaena* more than any other term when translating לביא, and this seems to have had an impact on subsequent

¹⁶¹ In addition to the material already cited, see *HALOT* 2:515, 517 and Waltke and O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §6.5.1a (p. 107). The latter designate ארי and אריה as “he-lion” with לביא as “she lion.” Cf. BDB 522.

¹⁶² Landsberger, *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamien*, 76; see note 134 above.

¹⁶³ Cf., e.g., Lipiński, “Lion and Lioness,” 217 on *l%b* and *l%bt* in North Arabian anthroponomy: “It is uncertain whether one should interpret *l%b* as ‘lion’ and *l%bt* as ‘lioness,’ or see in both forms the word ‘lioness’ written respectively without and with the feminine marker *-t*. In fact, the name meaning ‘lion’ and referring to the male is expressed in ʿAfaicit and in Tham-dic by the word *l%ṣd*, which does not seem to be a simple synonym of *l%b*: it rather signifies ‘lion,’ like *l%ṣad* in Arabic, while *l%b(t)* should then be the ‘lioness.’” But whether “lioness” *should* be *l%b(t)*, is exactly the question. There can be no doubt with regard to the gender of *l%bt* (with feminine ending), but given the situation in several of the Semitic languages, including Hebrew, it is not unthinkable, nor unlikely, that *l%b* could stand alongside of *l%ṣd* with both meaning “(male) lion.” The case of different words with similar semantic content is paralleled, that is, in many Semitic languages, most notably Hebrew, and could be explained in any number of ways (e.g., age, species, behavior, etc.) besides simply differences in gender.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 91 who thinks this tendency was “fostered originally by V[ulgate].”

translations and translators, especially in contexts where different lion terms appear in close proximity. Such contexts—not infrequently encountered—lead to yet another reason, and probably the most important, that has motivated the feminine translation of לביא. That reason is simply the desire for stylistic variation in the target translation language. In the face of several different lion terms, and with little data on how these differ from one another, the translator (ancient or modern) is forced to make decisions—some arbitrary—on how to treat these terms. Especially in poetic materials, translators often prefer some variation to reflect differences in the underlying Hebrew text. The various translations in the Versions are well-explained by this phenomenon, which is basically the desire to find an adequate, yet stylistically different equivalent, for the different, yet related terms used in a passage. The Vulgate's *leaena* can be explained in this fashion as can the LXX's σκῦμος;¹⁶⁵ or consider the feminine forms found in the Samaritan Pentateuch at Gen 49:9; Num 23:24, 24:9; and Deut 33:20.¹⁶⁶ Given the paucity of data that would prove that the grammatical form לביא is feminine, modern translations that translate it with “lioness” are, therefore, following the same pattern, opting for a stylistically different translation and choosing the feminine in light of previous scholarship that seems to have been heavily influenced by the Vulgate. However, the grammatical, syntactical, and comparative evidence is clearly *against* such an interpretation. This evidence indicates that the common Semitic root *lbl* had *both* masculine and feminine derivatives and “[s]o, it stands to reason that in Biblical Hebrew לביא, a masculine noun derived from *lbl*, means ‘lion,’ not ‘lioness.’”¹⁶⁷ Similarly, the feminine forms encountered in Hebrew and in other Semitic languages signify the female lion.

Two final comments must be made with reference to לביא:

- 1) The first has to do with Koehler's argument, already recounted above, that ארי and אריה designate the African lion while לביא signifies the Asiatic lion.¹⁶⁸ Koehler's opinion has been very influential, especially via *HALOT*/*HALAT* and the many works that rely heavily on

¹⁶⁵ See *ibid.*, 221 n. 1 who notes that in four of the instances where לביא is translated by σκῦμος, the parallel is ארי or אריה, both of which are translated by λέων (the total could be five instances as Kaplan neglects to include Ezek 19:2). The LXX therefore rendered לביא as σκῦμος, “not because לביא was regarded as meaning ‘whelp,’ but, rather, in order to avoid giving the erroneous impression that the same Hebrew ‘lion’ word appeared twice in the same verse.” This is supported by Symmachus at Joel 1:6 where he reads λέων whereas Aquila and Theodotian have σκῦμος (Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 78).

¹⁶⁶ See the apparatus in *BHS* and cf. *DCH* 4:513.

¹⁶⁷ Kaplan, “The Lion,” 86; cf. 90: “There is no evidence that לביא means ‘lioness.’” Note further *ibid.*, 91 for the same phenomenon in post-biblical Jewish literature, especially לביאים in IQH 13.7 and *b. Sanh.* 106a (see note 132 above).

¹⁶⁸ Koehler, “Lexikologisch-Geographisches,” 121–24.

it.¹⁶⁹ Kaplan has taken issue with Koehler's work, especially his assertion that the Asiatic lion (לביא) lived north of Jerusalem whereas the African lion (אריה/ארי) lived in the south. Kaplan has pointed to Isa 30:6 where the לביא is among the animals of the south (Negeb). Similarly, 2 Kgs 17:25–26 mentions אריית in Samaria.¹⁷⁰ Kaplan may be guilty of overstating Koehler's positions.¹⁷¹ Still, a hard and fast zoological classification of the Hebrew lion words according to speciation is unwarranted (see Chapter 2 §2.2.1.1).

- 2) Similarly ill-advised is Jastrow's suggestion that לביא be derived from לבה "to fan fire," thus yielding the definition "the flame-colored lion" for לביא.¹⁷² While a fascinating suggestion, it remains entirely speculative and cannot be either proven or disproven from the data of the Hebrew Bible.

גור/גור

1. Frequency, Location, and Instances

גור occurs nine times: Gen 49:9; Deut 33:22; Jer 51:38; Ezek 19:2, 3, 5; Nah 2:12, 13; Lam 4:3.

2. Comments on Morphology, Gender, etc.

גור is pointed in two different ways: גור and גור. The former is most common; the latter appears only twice (Jer 51:38; Nah 2:13). The pointing does not affect the meaning—both forms mean "cub." Two different plurals are attested for גור: the feminine plural construct at Nah 2:13 (גורותיי) and the masculine plural construct at Jer 51:38; Ezek 19:2, 3, 5; and Lam 4:3.

¹⁶⁹ Cf., e.g., *NIDOTTE*, 1:514: "may designate the Asiatic lion"; and *TDOT*, 1:377: "could mean the Asiatic lion if Nehring is correct in arguing that the fauna of northern Palestine and Syria essentially belong to the Palearctic region."

¹⁷⁰ Kaplan, "The Lion in the Hebrew Bible," 83–84. See further Ullendorf's critique of Koehler ("The Contribution of South Semitics," 192–93).

¹⁷¹ Koehler does, for instance, admit of the attestation of cognates to לביא in the south ("Lexikologisch-Geographisches," 122; but cf. 123) though he is more adamant regarding ארי/אריה ("es strahlt, von Palästina aus gesehen, nur nach Süden aus"; *ibid.*, 122; so also 123). See also *ibid.*, 123–24 for Koehler's geographical division of north and south whereby Samaria might be considered as belonging to the southern fauna region. Note also Koehler's final, nuanced remarks: "Später haben sich die Gebiete und Bereiche [of the words לביא and אריה] gemischt.... Wird es je gelingen, ihre genauere Herkunft zu bestimmen?"

¹⁷² Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:689.

3. Semitic Cognates

גור is attested in later Hebrew, Jewish-Aramaic (where it is also used for the cub of a dog), Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and Palmyrene Aramaic (*gwrβ*). Akkadian *girru/gerru* denotes a “young beast of prey.” Aramaic *g-ryβ* is a “young lion”; Syriac *guryβ* means the same. Moabite attests *grn* and perhaps *gr[t]*, but the meaning of these terms is uncertain. Arabic *jurw* is the cub of a dog or of a beast of prey. One notes in this material that, especially in the Northwest Semitic inscriptions, there is a good deal of uncertainty as what *gr* means.¹⁷³ One should also note that the cognates are not exclusively related to the lion; some designate the young of any animal, including the lion but also the dog.¹⁷⁴

4. Versions

The LXX translates גור with σκυτάς in every one of its nine occurrences. The Targum employs two terms: בן (Jer 51:38; Ezek 19:2, 3, 5; Nah 2:12, 13; Lam 4:3) and גר (Deut 33:22).¹⁷⁵ The Vulgate uses three terms: *catulus leonis* (four times; only with the construct phrase: גור אריה), *catulus* (three times), *leunculos* (twice).

5. גור with Other Lion Terms

גור does not occur in Job 4:10–11, but appears in conjunction with כפיר, ארי, אריה, and לביא in Nah 2:12–13 (see §7.1 under ארי/אריה above). The construct phrase גור אריה appears in Gen 49:9 (in context with אריה and לביא); Deut 33:33; and Nah 2:12 (parallel to לביא אריה). A closely related phrase is גורי אריות (Jer 51:38) which is parallel to כפירים. Important information regarding the גור is found in Ezek 19:2, 3, and 5. Here a lioness (לביא) raises her cubs (גוריה) among אריות and כפירים. Indeed, the גור becomes a כפיר. The גור is thus clearly a cub, younger than an ארי, a כפיר, or a לביא. This impression is supported by Nah 2:13, which recounts how the אריה provided food for his female cubs (גוריות) and his female lions (לביאות). The youth of the גור is further underscored in Lam 4:3, where it is one who suckles the breast. It should be noted, however, that no other lion terms are found in Lam 4:3 (see §7 below).

6. PNs and GNs

Two GNs could be related to גור. The first is Gur “near Ibleam,” mentioned in 2 Kgs 9:27. This is apparently the same site discussed in Taanach letter 2 line 5

¹⁷³ See *DNWSI* 1:232; cf. *TSSI* 1:76, 80–81; 3:124–27, 130.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere*, 191 and n. 185; 254, 265 n. 13, and 275; who takes it as a “Wanderwort.”

¹⁷⁵ Note the minus at Gen 49:9. Note also that Nah 2:12–13 and Lam 4:3 are quite free and interpretive. בן, therefore, probably approximates גור in these passages, but it is hard to be certain.

(preserved as *gur-ra*).¹⁷⁶ Zertal has identified it with Khirbet en-Najjar to the east of Ibleam (Khirbet Belameh), located on the way from Jezreel to Samaria.¹⁷⁷ It is difficult to say if this GN is related to גור “lion cub, cub” or to I גור “to sojourn” (so BDB). Similarly uncertain in derivation is GN גור-בעל (Gur-Baal in 2 Chr 26:7). This site is unknown and many emend the text in light of the LXX and the Vulgate, both of which apparently read צור בעל (“rock of Baal”). HALOT equates the place with Yagur (יגור) in Josh 15:21, thereby locating it in the south or southeast of Judah.¹⁷⁸ The placement to the east may be warranted by its association with “Arabs” and Meunim.¹⁷⁹ No PNs have been preserved in the Hebrew Bible that relate to גור.

7. Discussion

The most pressing question regarding גור is whether or not it refers to the cub of the lion in every instance. Clearly this is not the case in the other Semitic languages, where cognates refer generically to the young of many different animals.¹⁸⁰ But the context of nearly every text in the Hebrew Bible indicates that גור there means “lion cub.” The one possible exception is Lam 4:3, which mentions גור in relationship with תנין. The latter term is often emended to תנים (following Qere) or is understood as preserving the Aramaic plural ending, though the LXX’s reading (δράκοντες) reflects the MT’s (Kethib) תנין. The problems of this particular verse cannot be addressed in detail here. Even so, it should be noted that Lam 4:3 provides important information regarding the age of a גור, whatever its species, as this text reveals that a גור still nurses (ינק // חלץ שד).¹⁸¹ To conclude this point: with the possible exception of Lam 4:3, גור always signifies a lion cub. This is especially clear in texts like Ezekiel 19 and Nahum 2. גור אריה, furthermore, seems to be a technical term designating the young of the אריה and, as in Jer 51:38 (גורי אריות), of the ארי. לביא, in contrast, apparently prefers בן (Job 4:11; see above).

Finally, in the light of the zoological research on nomad lions¹⁸² it is appealing to relate גור to I גור “to sojourn/dwell as an alien.” While this might be possible in certain contexts (especially in the construct phrase at Gen 49:9; Deut 33:22; and Nah 2:12), it is obviated in several other contexts where גור appears in the plural (e.g., Jer 51:38) and designates a lion that is too young to hunt for itself (Ezek 19:3, 5; Nah 2:13).

¹⁷⁶ Adam Zertal, “Gur (Place),” *ABD* 2:1099.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ HALOT 1:185.

¹⁷⁹ Randall W. Younker, “Gurbaal (Place),” *ABD* 2:1100.

¹⁸⁰ Kaplan treats גור briefly (“The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 199–200 n. 41), but eliminates it from consideration for this reason.

¹⁸¹ Cf. HALOT 1:185: “(still sucking) cub”; TLOT, 1:171: “the suckling lion cub.”

¹⁸² See Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, especially 64–82.

שָׁחַל

1. Frequency, Location, and Instances

שָׁחַל occurs seven times: Hos 5:14, 13:7; Ps 91:13; Prov 26:13; Job 4:10, 10:16, 28:8.

2. Comments on Morphology, Gender, etc.

שָׁחַל, a *qayl*/segholate noun, appears only in the singular. Despite the Versions, which sometimes translate the term with a feminine (see §4 below), the syntax shows the noun is masculine.¹⁸³ For example, Job 28:8 uses a masculine verbal form (לֹא-עֲדָה) in connection with שָׁחַל; the MT of Job 10:16 is similar, but is probably in need of emendation (see Appendix 3).

3. Semitic Cognates

Evidence from the other Semitic languages is of little help with שָׁחַל. Cognate terms exist, to be sure, but these are either dependent on the Hebrew (e.g., Aramaic *šaḥl*)¹⁸⁴ or are not directly related. The latter is the case with Akkadian *šajḫu*, which has been thought to mean “call” or “proclaim.” Hebrew שָׁחַל is, consequently, taken by some scholars to designate a roaring beast of some sort (so, a lion). Note that the Arabic verbal cognate refers to the braying of a donkey. But Akkadian *šajḫu* actually means “filter” or the like.¹⁸⁵ Similarly mistaken may be arguments based on Arabic *saḥl*—used of young sheep, goats, and humans—that posit that שָׁחַל means, by extension, a “young” lion.¹⁸⁶ Kaplan’s conclusion that the comparative evidence is not conclusive regarding the meaning of שָׁחַל is thus sound: “If שָׁחַל means ‘lion,’ this must be proved on the basis of internal Biblical evidence alone, and its root...must

¹⁸³ See BDB 1006; Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 111.

¹⁸⁴ See Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:1548.

¹⁸⁵ *AHW* 3:1128 (“durchsehen, filtern”); Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate, *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (2d ed.; SANTAG 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 346; *contra* BDB 1006 and others. See Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 103, 105–106.

¹⁸⁶ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 106 and 229 n. 26; and *HALOT* 4:1461–62; *contra* *TDOT*, 1:377; and L. Kopf, “Arabische Etymologien und Parallelen zum Bibelwörterbuch,” *VT* 8 (1958): 207. After reviewing the evidence for שָׁחַל as: a) “lion”; or b) “lion cub, young lion,” *HALOT* concludes: “while there is more evidence to support the first translation lion (a) than the second lizard (b), deciding between them is not easy” (4:1462). Note that *HALOT* is in error here; (b) is not “lizard” but “lion cub, young lion” (see 4:1461). Cf. the German original: “Eine Entscheidung zw[ischen]. a) und b) ist nicht leicht, doch spricht wohl mehr für a) als für b)” (*HALAT* 4:1356).

therefore be a homonym of one of the phonetically equivalent Semitic roots discussed above.”¹⁸⁷

4. Versions

The LXX translates שָׁחַל with five different terms: πάνθηρ (“panther”; Hos 5:14, 13:7),¹⁸⁸ λέων (Job 10:16; 28:8), λέαινα (Job 4:10); ἀσπίδος (“asp”; Ps 91:13); and ἀποστελλόμενος (“sent”; Prov 26:13).¹⁸⁹ The Targum utilizes four terms: לִיתָא (Hos 5:14, 13:7; Job 28:8); שָׁחַלָא (Prov 26:13; Job 4:10); אַרְיָא (Job 10:16); and בַּר אַרְיִין (Ps 91:13). The Vulgate uses only two terms: *leaena* (six times) and *aspis* (“asp”; Ps 91:13).

5. שָׁחַל with Other Lion Terms

שָׁחַל occurs in context with four of the lion terms in Job 4:10–11: אַרְיָא, כְּפִיר (both of which are in parallel), לִישׁ, and לְבִיא (see §7.2 under אַרְיָא/אַרִי above). It occurs in parallel with כְּפִיר two more times (Hos 5:14; Ps 91:13), and with אַרִי once (Prov 26:13).

6. PNs and GNs

No GNs or PNs related to שָׁחַל are preserved in the Hebrew Bible. Dahood opined that the Ugaritic GN *šd šʿlmmt* was related to שָׁחַל.¹⁹⁰ But the interpretation of this GN, as well as Ugaritic *šʿl* in general, remains uncertain.¹⁹¹

7. Discussion

The LXX and the Vulgate understood the שָׁחַל of Ps 91:13 to be some sort of serpent. On this basis Mowinckel argued that such an interpretation was not only true for this passage, but for others as well—most notably Job 28:8.¹⁹² But the case can be made that the Versions are simply mistaken or interpretive at Ps 91:13. The parallelism of the verse indicates that שָׁחַל designates some sort

¹⁸⁷ Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 107. Cf. *TDOT*, 1:377: “Etymologically, the meaning of *shachal* is not clear, but the context suggests that it means ‘lion,’ ‘young lion.’”

¹⁸⁸ Aquila and Symmachus translate שָׁחַל with λέαινα in Hos 5:14; Theodotion has λῑς “lion.” See Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 100.

¹⁸⁹ Clearly the LXX of Prov 26:13 is an error, reading שָׁחַל for MT’s שָׁחַל (see Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 228 n. 1).

¹⁹⁰ *KTU* 1.5 V 19; 1.6 II 20. See Dahood, *Psalms II*, 333 and *WUS* 303 (#2589). But cf. *HALOT* 4:1461 and the literature cited there.

¹⁹¹ See *TDOT*, 1:377.

¹⁹² Sigmund Mowinckel, “שָׁחַל,” in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver* (ed. D. Winton Thomas and W. D. McHardy; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 95–103.

of lion even here,¹⁹³ and this can be further demonstrated by recourse to the literary and iconographical evidence.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, it is also evident that most lexica and versions—both ancient and modern—have understood the term (despite its low frequency) to mean “lion.”¹⁹⁵ This is supported on many counts, probably the most significant of which is a text like Job 4:10–11 where five different terms for lions, including שָׁחַל, are found. It seems highly unlikely that a term that had nothing to do with lions would be inserted into such a context. Similarly, a type of chiasm or *inclusio* of sorts is present in Hos 13:7–8, which starts with the שָׁחַל before moving on to the נָמֵר (“leopard”), the דָּב (“bear”), and the לִבְיָא.¹⁹⁶ Though the chiasm/*inclusio* structure is not exact, the parallelism in Prov 26:13 (where שָׁחַל is parallel to אָרִי) and Hos 5:14 (שָׁחַל // כַּפִּיר) is certainly indicative that the term means, broadly speaking, a lion of some sort.¹⁹⁷ Hence, Mowinckel’s position, while intriguing, must be deemed invalid.¹⁹⁸ The שָׁחַל is, in sum, a lion of some sort.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ As Mowinckel himself acknowledges (“שָׁחַל,” 96). Note שָׁחַל וּפְתֵן is parallel to כַּפִּיר וְחֲנִיָּן.

¹⁹⁴ The same critique can be leveled at Mowinckel’s statement (“שָׁחַל,” 96) that it is the serpent that “rises up” (יָנָאָה) to make Job his prey (Job 10:16), whereas “the lion crouches before it jumps upon its prey.” Rising up is common in both the iconographical and textual descriptions of the lion’s hunt (see, e.g., **figs. 3.56, 3.104, 3.136–138; 4.5–6, 4.9–11, 4.13–15, 4.24**, etc.). Though the latter is designated in the Hebrew Bible primarily by עָלָה and קָיָם (see Appendix 2), יָנָאָה is simply too infrequently attested to say that it can apply *only* to a serpent, not a mammal such as the lion. Here too, recourse to actual lion hunting habits (i.e., the zoological data) would have corrected an interpretive error. Moreover, יָנָאָה in Job 10:16 is syntactically awkward and is probably to be emended (see Appendix 3).

¹⁹⁵ See Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 101–102.

¹⁹⁶ The passage mentions, finally, the חַיַּית הַשָּׂדֶה (“beast of the field”).

¹⁹⁷ So Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 107: “In all seven of the verses in which it appears שָׁחַל either unequivocally pertains to the lion or else makes good enough sense construed as ‘lion’ to make unnecessary another interpretation of the word.” Cf. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 220 n. 13h: שָׁחַל “is guaranteed next to” כַּפִּיר.

¹⁹⁸ See Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 107–13 for various other arguments against Mowinckel. Mowinckel admits the weakness of his conclusion (“שָׁחַל,” 103: “As a rule the O.T. poets may have meant ‘lion’”), but maintains that in Job 28:8 שָׁחַל must mean something like serpent-dragon. But even here, his strongest case, Mowinckel fails to convince. שָׁחַל בְּנֵי שָׁחַל may be connected to the mythological background he mentions and this could impinge on the interpretation of שָׁחַל there, but the opposite could just as easily be the case. If fact, the opposite is *exactly* what the rabbis thought, since they understood שָׁחַל בְּנֵי שָׁחַל to be a term for lion. Alternatively, the term could be more mundane and simply descriptive: “proud animals.” As noted in Chapters 2 and 4, the lion’s boldness is a well-attested phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Prov 28:1) and the broader ancient Near East.

¹⁹⁹ As with כַּפִּיר, this argument can be further supported by appeal to the semantic domain of lion imagery, especially that which appears with שָׁחַל. See Appendix 2.

But exactly what sort? The cognates, as already indicated, are of little help.²⁰⁰ The parallelism, while demonstrating that the שחל is a lion, does not help in this regard either. The various texts mentioning the שחל also do not specify details regarding the kind or type of lion that it is—for example, whether it is old or young.²⁰¹ Still, these passages reveal: 1) that the שחל has a voice (קול) like a lion's roar (Job 4:10); 2) that it is possible to tread on a שחל, as one treads on or tramples the serpent, adder, and young lion (Ps 91:13); 3) that occasionally the שחל appeared in the road as did a lion (ארי) in the street (Prov 26:13); and 4) that there were also places where the שחל did not go (Job 28:8). Syntactically, the שחל is male; this is confirmed by the parallel terms with which it appears. Further knowledge, however, is unfortunately not forthcoming.²⁰²

לִישׁ

1. Frequency, Location, and Instances

לִישׁ occurs three times: Isa 30:6; Prov 30:30; and Job 4:11.

2. Comments on Morphology, Gender, etc.

לִישׁ occurs only in the singular and is masculine in form. The gender is confirmed by the use of masculine verbal forms in Job 4:11 and Prov 30:30; similarly, a masculine singular participle of some sort is probably to be read in Isa 30:6 (see Appendix 3). A feminine form apparently also existed, if the feminine GN לִישָׁה is in fact related (see §7 below).

3. Semitic Cognates

Cognate terms for לִישׁ occur in Aramaic *layt* and *lēt*²⁰³ and Arabic *lay*, the latter of which also occurs in the feminine. Some have argued that Akkadian *n̄š̄u* and *n̄š̄tu* are also related to לִישׁ via a common Semitic root *lyšlt* meaning “lion.” The *l > n* shift in initial position is not common, but does occur sporadically in dialects of Akkadian, Cypro-Phoenician, Arabic, and Aramaic (among others).²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ But cf. Lipiński, “Lion and Lioness,” 218: “The *šaʿal* seems...to be the ‘grinder,’ at least etymologically.”

²⁰¹ *Contra* TLOT, 1:171: the שחל is “the weaned youngster.” So correctly Mowinkel, “שחל,” 95: “None of the O.T. passages, however, gives any indication as to whether the animal in question is a young one or an old one.” See above.

²⁰² Such a situation is no doubt responsible for the Versional evidence, which seems to reflect a concern for stylistic variation.

²⁰³ See Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:710.

²⁰⁴ See Edward Lipiński, *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (OLA 80; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 134–35; idem, “Lion and Lioness,” 218; cf. Landsberger, *Die*

4. Non-Semitic Cognates

Greek λῑς²⁰⁵ appears to be a Semitic loanword from לִישׁ.

5. Versions

The LXX translates לִישׁ with 2 terms: σκῦμνος λέοντος (Isa 30:6; Prov 30:30) and μυρμηκολέων (“ant lion”; Job 4:11). The oddity of the latter reference is probably what prompted the revisions to change it (Aquila: λῑς; Symmachus: λέων). The Targum uses two translations: אַרְיָא (Prov 30:30; Job 4:11) and גַּר אַרְיָא (Isa 30:6). The Vulgate also uses two terms: *leo* (Isa 30:6; Prov 30:30) and *tigris* (“tiger”; Job 4:11).

6. לִישׁ with Other Lion Terms

לִישׁ occurs with לְבִיא in Isa 30:6 and בְּנֵי לְבִיא in Job 4:11. In the context of the latter, the terms are parallel. However, given the presence of four other lion terms in the immediate context, the precise relationship of the לִישׁ to the לְבִיא cannot be determined (see §7.2 under אַרְיָא/אַרִי above).

7. PNs and GNs

לִישׁ occurs as an early GN (Laish) for the later GN Dan in Judg 18:7, 14, 27, 29. Josh 19:47 calls this same site לִשָּׁם. Perhaps לִישָּׁם should be read;²⁰⁶ alternatively, the לִשָּׁם may be spelled defectively with an enclitic ם.²⁰⁷ The feminine form לִישָׁה occurs as a GN (Laisha) in Isa 10:30.²⁰⁸ This site is unknown.²⁰⁹ A PN לִישׁ is also attested: Laish (“Leo”) is the father of Michal’s second husband (1 Sam 25:44; 2 Sam 3:15 [Qere; Kethib = לִישׁ]).

8. Discussion

לִישׁ is some sort of male lion but the low frequency of the term prevents complete certainty as to its type, age, status, or the like.²¹⁰ Even so, Prov 30:30 describes the לִישׁ as “mighty” (גִּבּוֹר) among the beasts, and this casts some light on the לִישׁ, at least on how the ancients perceived it.

Fauna des alten Mesopotamien, 76 n. 7. Mowinckel’s argument (“שִׁחַל,” 98) that *nēšū* is derived from the root *nš* is thus unlikely.

²⁰⁵ See, e.g., Iliad 15.275; cf. 11.239 and 18.318 (LSJ, 1053).

²⁰⁶ With the -ם ending (so *HALOT* 2:537).

²⁰⁷ See Robert G. Boling and G. E. Wright, *Joshua* (AB 6; Garden City: Doubleday, 1982), 466.

²⁰⁸ See Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 98 and 227 n. 15 for the form as a feminine, not suffixed with ה-locative. The locative, furthermore, would not make sense in the immediate context.

²⁰⁹ Isa 10:30 places it north of Jerusalem. The village el-Esawāye (two miles NE) has been raised as a possibility (BDB 539; *HALOT* 2:530).

²¹⁰ Of course, one might take note of the Vulgate’s *tigris* for לִישׁ in Job 4:11 and Kim’s decision that לִישׁ refers to an old lion (הַאֲרִיָּה הַגָּדוֹל) (see Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 95). The former option is probably stylistic variation; the latter is conjectural.

Appendix 2:

The Semantic Domain of Lion Imagery¹

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

- 1) The terms discussed in this Appendix are not treated exhaustively (consult the standard lexica and concordances for full listings). Rather, only those passages that are related to or have bearing on lion imagery are included here.
- 2) Similarly, this Appendix does not provide translations or extensive discussion of passages that contain one of the lion terms.² Instead, full translations are provided only for those passages that are not already treated in Appendices 1 and 3. Of course, some of the former are verses from the immediate context of the latter.
- 3) The building of a semantic domain of lion imagery is important for at least three reasons: First, it constructs a full listing of the various verbs, adjectives, and so forth used with reference to the lion terms, and hence the lion image. Second, it confirms a leonine interpretation of those terms that might have multiple or at least binary connotations—for example, כפיר³ or

¹ New Testament linguists have led the way in applying semantic analyses to the biblical text and the field of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible lacks some of the tools of which the former can boast. See, e.g., Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, et al., ed., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2d ed.; 2 vols.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1988, 1989). Note especially the methodological considerations in their introduction (1:vi-xxiii). A similar project is currently underway for the Old Testament. See the report in Lénart J. de Regt, “Multiple Meaning and Semantic Domains in Some Biblical Hebrew Lexicographical Projects: The Description of *zeraḥ*,” *ZAH* 10 (1997): 63-75. For application of semantic insights into a particular root, see James M. Kennedy, “The Root *ḠḠR* in the Light of Semantic Analysis,” *JBL* 106 (1987): 47-64. More generally, *DCH* has attempted to draw on semantic research in its lexicographic presentation. See also the literature cited in de Regt, “Multiple Meaning,” 73-75. Many of the decisions made in the construction of this Appendix follow the principles laid out by de Regt.

² For etymological discussion of these terms, see Appendix 1; for a list of passages, with translation, see Appendix 3.

³ Note, for instance, Kaplan’s treatment of כפיר (“The Lion,” 56-64). In many cases where כפיר appears by itself (i.e., without any of the other lion words), Kaplan would find ambiguity. This leads him to argue that כפיר does not always mean “lion” (see the discussion in Appendix 1). However, recourse to the semantic domain indicates that what Kaplan views as ambiguous is typically not so. E.g., Nah 2:12-13—quite apart from the other lion terms that appear there—contains נוער and טרף, both of which are related

שחל.⁴ Third, it adduces additional passages where leonine imagery is evoked and utilized but where none of the lion terms is explicitly present. These passages are marked here with an asterisk (*).

- 4) Some elements belonging to the semantic domain of lion imagery are found elsewhere in this work.⁵ Though those items might be included in a comprehensive presentation of the domain, the purpose of this survey is primarily to bring additional instances of leonine imagery to light. Hence, the presentation here is not exhaustive; more information would be required for that type of presentation.⁶ On this point, it should be noted that high frequency terms that apply to any number of subjects in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., *עלה*, *קום*, *אכל*, and so forth) have not been searched with the purpose of securing additional passages evoking non-explicit leonine imagery. The extremely high frequency of such terms was a factor in this consideration, but it is certainly also the case that these terms are not by themselves enough to evoke leonine imagery. A *constellation of terms*, especially if these be high frequency words, is required to identify the presence of leonine imagery.⁷ Of course, this is not necessarily the case in passages—or lexemes—that are peculiar, for the most part, to the lion.⁸
- 5) A representative listing of passages from Appendix 3 is included after each lexical item in a domain. The reader is cautioned that the word or syntagma in question—especially if it is high in frequency (see #4 above)—might appear in one or more of the other passages in Appendix 3 (154 total). Again, while an attempt has been made to be comprehensive, the primary emphasis in this Appendix has been to catalogue the various lexemes used with reference to the lion, especially with an eye to identifying additional, but non-explicit instances of leonine imagery (see #3-4 above). These

elsewhere to lions and comprise part of the semantic domain of leonine imagery (see Domains 3 and 6 below; *contra* Kaplan, “The Lion,” 63-64).

⁴ See the discussion of Mowinckel’s argument in Appendix 1. One might also include here the question of the meaning of *נור* in Lam 4:3, but see Appendix 1 on this point.

⁵ See, e.g., the treatment in Appendix 1 of each of the lion terms along with their parallels, associated GNs and PNs, and the like.

⁶ E.g., it would be ideal to have a specification of which terms in which (sub)domains occur (or do not occur) with each of the lion terms. While this would be part of a more comprehensive presentation, the goal of this study is leonine imagery as a whole, not the image of, say, the *אריה* vs. the image of the *שחל*. Hence, all of the lion terms are treated together here, combining the entire semantic domain of each.

⁷ The reader should also be aware of the existence of passages where the general sentiment is quite similar to other leonine passages, but where the language is sufficiently distinct to cast doubt on whether the lion is being evoked as the image. An excellent example is Micah 3:2-3. Cf. also Ezek 34:8-10. Such passages as these, that is, may very well be evoking the lion but one cannot be certain in the absence of a constellation of vocabulary relating to the lion’s semantic domain.

⁸ See, e.g., some of the items in Domain 5 below.

latter, especially those deemed relatively secure, have accordingly been utilized in the body of this work.

- 6) Finally, the translations of the passages included here are intended to be functional, not definitive. As is the case in Appendix 3, the presentation of isolated verses without broader literary context limits this Appendix's usefulness. There can be no doubt, moreover, that that broader context would also dictate nuances and revisions for any final, polished translation. Hence, the translations offered here are provisional, intended primarily to serve as a quick and easy reference to texts treated in the body of this study.

DOMAIN 1: ANATOMY

This domain includes terms used to describe the lion's body or body parts, whatever the condition or status of the lion (i.e., live or dead, real or metaphorical).

A. Body as Whole. The lion's body is referred to with two words. Both terms refer to the dead body or carcass of the lion Samson killed. גוייה, in particular, is often used of corpses (e.g., 1 Sam 31:10, 12; Nah 3:3), though not exclusively so (Gen 47:18; Neh 9:37).

- 1) מַפְלֵת ("carcass"). Found only in Judg 14:8.

- 2) גוייה ("carcass/body"). Used in Judg 14:8, 9.

*The only additional associations of either term with lion imagery is the use of גוייה to refer to the bodies of the cherubim (who have some leonine traits) in Ezek 1:11, 23.⁹

B. Body Parts. Various parts of the lion's body are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. It is noteworthy that a large number of these verses focus on the lion's mouth, teeth, and fangs.

- 1) יד ("paw"). The lion's יד is mentioned in 1 Sam 17:37 and in Dan 6:28. The term refers to the hand and forearm when used with human beings, so "paw" or perhaps even "claw" might be an appropriate anatomical equivalent for the lion. However, יד is often used metaphorically of power or the like and this cannot be ruled out, at least in the case of Dan 6:28.¹⁰

- 2) לֵב ("heart"). 2 Sam 17:20 refers to the heart of a lion in a passage metaphorically describing the valiance of warriors. The term seems

⁹ The word in the latter text is missing in LXX.

¹⁰ On the Daniel passage, see Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (5th ed.; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), §84 (pp. 36-37), who thinks that "hand" in connection with other prepositions (here with בִּין) "tends to lose its concrete meaning and assume the character of a preposition" (36).

metaphorical with reference to the lion as well—it probably denotes the lion’s courage, boldness, and so forth (cf. Prov 30:30).

- 3) פָּנִים (“face”). The face of the lion is mentioned in Ezek 1:10, 10:14, 41:19; Amos 5:19; and 1 Chr 12:9.
- 4) זָקָן (“beard”). This word is used of a lion only once, in 1 Sam 17:35:

*1 Sam 17:35: “Then I would go after it¹¹ and I would strike it and I would save (the sheep)¹² from its mouth. And if it rose up against me, I would seize it by its beard and I would strike it and kill it.”¹³

Although זָקָן normally refers to the beard of humans, it is possible that here it refers to the lion’s jaw.¹⁴ Even so, both iconography and zoology show that it is not impossible that the hair on the lion’s lower jaw might be seen as, and designated as, a “beard.” Perhaps, given זָקָן’s significance as a sign of age and its connection to hair, it could even designate the lion’s “mane.”¹⁵ In any event, it is clear, especially from the iconography of Neo-Assyrian seals, exactly where David grasped the lion (or bear) before killing it (see Chapter 5).
- 5) פֶּה (“mouth”). The lion’s mouth is mentioned in Amos 3:12; Pss 22:14,¹⁶ 22; 58:7; and Dan 6:23. Additionally, *1 Sam 17:35 mentions the lion’s mouth (see 1.B.4 above).
- 6) שָׁן (“teeth”). References to the lion’s teeth are found in Joel 1:6; Pss 57:5, 58:7; Job 4:10. The teeth are explicitly and expectedly located in the mouth in Ps 58:7, likened to spears and arrows in Ps 57:5, and can be broken according to Job 4:10.¹⁷
- 7) מַתְלָעוֹת (“fangs”). This term is utilized in Joel 1:6. Additionally, there are two other passages that employ מַתְלָעוֹת and that also seem

¹¹ The suffix in this form and the following forms is singular, though the referent from 1 Sam 17:34 is either the אֶרֶץ or the דָּיב, or both. See the discussion in Chapter 5 (§5.3.1).

¹² A few Hebrew manuscripts and rabbinic citations read the 3ms suffix (cf. Syr and Targ^{MSS}).

¹³ Note also 2 Sam 20:9-10a, which is important in this regard as it describes a similar situation and pose, though it uses the verb אָחַז whereas 1 Sam 17:35 uses חָזַק.

¹⁴ So NRSV.

¹⁵ I thank Katherine Doob Sakenfeld for this suggestion (private communication).

¹⁶ But note that the reference to mouths here may refer back to the bulls and strong bulls of Ps 22:13.

¹⁷ On Job 4:10, see Mitchell Dahood, “The Etymology of *MALTAIOT* (Ps 58,7),” *CBQ* 17 (1955): 180 n. 2: “By syllepsis the verb *nittāwū* is predicated of the three subjects....It is also possible to maintain that the roar and the voice of the lions were looked upon as concrete physical entities, forces of which it could be accurately stated that ‘they are broken’....thus to say that the roar and the voice of the lions are broken is equivalent to affirming that their physical might is shattered.” On the general idiom “to break teeth,” see Jo Ann Hackett and John Huehnergard, “On Breaking Teeth,” *HTR* 77 (1984): 259-75. They tie the idiom to ancient Near Eastern legal precedents. While their discussion may well apply to Ps 3:8 (see 3.F.1 below), it seems less convincing with reference to Psalm 58, Job 4, and Job 29.

to evoke lion imagery and apply it to the oppressive and/or unrighteous:

*Prov 30:14: “A generation—its teeth are swords and its fangs knives (ready) to devour the poor from the land and the needy from humanity.”¹⁸

*Job 29:17: “I broke the fangs of the unrighteous, I made the prey fall from his teeth.”¹⁹

- 8) מלתעות (“fangs”). Dahood argued that this *hapax* is derived from *ntl* and is thus a “near cognate accusative” to the verb utilized in Ps 58:7, נחץ, which indicates that the lion’s fangs could be torn out.²⁰ His etymology, while possible, is not convincing in light of the more frequently attested מתלעות (see 1.B.7). That is, instead of attempting to derive both מלתעות and מתלעות from נתע, it is much simpler to posit that מלתעות is the result of metathesis from מתלעות and take both from תלע, “to gnaw.”²¹
- 9) לשון (“tongue”). Finally, the other component of the lion’s mouth besides the teeth and fangs—namely, the tongue—is mentioned in Ps 57:5, where it is likened to a sharp sword.²²

DOMAIN 2: MOVEMENT

This domain pertains to the lion’s movement or lack thereof, regardless of its particular pose (lying, crouching, rising, etc.). See also Domain 3 below as there is some overlap between the two.

A. Lying Down.

- 1) רבץ (“to lie down”). The term is found with lions at Gen 49:9 and Ezek 19:2, although it is not used exclusively of them (see, e.g., Gen 49:14, Exod 23:5; Gen 4:7). The term is also used of lions in Ps 104:22 (first mentioned in 104:21):
*Ps 104:22: “When the sun rises, they are gathered (together), and they lie down in their dens.”
- 2) שכב (“to lie down”). This high frequency term is found with the lion at Num 23:24 and 24:9. The former indicates that not lying down (לא ישכב) is the equivalent of hunting (cf. Domain 3 below).

¹⁸ In addition to the reference to fangs, note the mention of teeth (see above 1.B.6) and the devouring of human subjects (see, e.g., 3.G.1 and 10.A.1 below).

¹⁹ Note the reference to prey (see 3.G.1 below), teeth (1.B.6 above), and breaking (see 3.K.1-3 below), especially with reference to fangs or teeth (see 1.B.6 above and 1.B.8 below).

²⁰ Dahood, “The Etymology of *MAL TAʾOT*,” 180-83. See also idem, *Psalms II: 51-100* (AB 17; Garden City: Doubleday, 1968), 61.

²¹ So also Hackett and Huehnergard, “On Breaking Teeth,” 261 n. 4 and 262. Cf. *HALOT* 3:537, 595 which indicates both terms are from the unattested root *לתע.

²² Cf. 1QH 13.13.

B. Standing. Only one term is found with reference to the lion standing:

- 1) עמד (“to stand”). The lion of 1 Kings 13 is said to be standing (still)—here the opposite of its expected behavior (eating)—three times: 1 Kgs 13:24, 25, 28. The lions that decorate the throne and dais are also described as standing (1 Kgs 10:19-20//2 Chr 9:18-19).²³

C. Crouching.

- 1) כרע (“to crouch down”). This term is used of the lion at Gen 49:9 and Num 24:9. In none of the other instances of the term does it refer to a lion.
- 2) שחח (“to crouch down”). The term is used of lions only once, Job 38:40, where it continues the question begun in 38:39:
*Job 38:40: “when they crouch in their dens, when they lie in the covert of their lair?”

D. Rising.

- 1) עלה (“to go up”). This extremely common verb (over 1000 occurrences) is used with the lion at Gen 49:9; Isa 35:9; Jer 4:7, 49:19, 50:44; cf. also Joel 1:6.
- 2) קום (“to rise up”). קום is found with reference to the lion in Gen 49:9; Num 23:24, 24:9. The particular phrase, מי יקימנו (“Who would rouse him?”) occurs only in Gen 49:9 and Num 24:9. Additionally, קום is used with על (“to rise up against”) in *1 Sam 17:35 (see 1.B.4 above).
- 3) נשא (“to lift up”). The HtD imperfect plural (“rousing themselves”) appears with the lion only at Num 23:24.²⁴

E. Walking/Coming/Going/Departing. Several terms describe the general (walking) movement of the lion.

- 1) הלך (“to walk”). The HtD appears in Ezek 19:6 (“to prowl about”), whereas the G appears in Hos 5:14 (after attacking, the lion departs) and Nah 2:12.
- 2) בוא (“to come”). Used of the lion at 1 Sam 17:34.
- 3) עדה (“to pass over”). Job 28:8 describes a place that the lion has not passed over.
- 4) עבר (“to cross over”). Micah 5:7 uses this term to describe the lion’s activity among flocks of sheep.
- 5) נסע (“to set out”). The lion of Jer 4:7, described as “a destroyer of nations” (see 7.A.4 below), sets out.
- 6) יצא (“to go out”). The lion of Jer 4:7 goes out from its place (במקומו; see 6.B.1 below).

²³ Cf. also Isa 21:8 but here the term is probably used realistically of a watchman who is metaphorically called a/the “lion.” See Appendix 3.

²⁴ See also נשא in 3.E.5 below.

- 7) עִזַּב (“to forsake”). Used of a lion forsaking its covert (Jer 25:38).
- 8) זָנַק (“to leap”?). Found only at Deut 33:22, this *hapax* is difficult. “Leap” follows LXX; others have suggested “shy away from.”²⁵
- 9) פָּרַד (“to be divided/scattered”). Lion cubs are scattered in Job 4:11.²⁶
- 10) אָסַף (“to be gathered”). This term is found in *Ps 104:22 (see 2.A.1 above), where it is used of lions gathering together after the sun rises.

DOMAIN 3: HUNTING

Terms which can be tied to the lion’s hunting habits, especially via contextual clues, are included in Domain 3. However, see also Domains 2 and 4 as these are closely related. Also included in Domain 3 is language used to describe *the hunting of the lion*.

A. The Need/Desire to Hunt.

- 1) כָּסַף (“to long”). In the G, כָּסַף refers to the lion’s eagerness to tear prey (Ps 17:12).²⁷
- 2) בָּקַשׁ (“to seek”). Ps 104:21 ties the roaring for prey to the lion’s search for food from God.
- 3) חָיָה (“appetite”). חָיָה has this meaning apparently only in Job 33:30 and 38:39.²⁸ In the latter text, the satisfaction (מִלֵּא) of appetite is parallel to hunting prey.
- 4) לָהֵט (“to be eager/aflame for”). Ps 57:5 describes the lion as eager for (i.e., in order to eat) human children.

B. Hunting.

- 1) צוּד (“to hunt”). God hunts Job like a lion (Job 10:16). Cf. Job 38:39 where Yahweh is the hunter (i.e., provider of food) for the lions.²⁹

²⁵ Notably Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (repr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 69, 80 n. 74. See Appendix 3 and cf. 9.A.12.d below.

²⁶ Cf. the description of Saul and Jonathan, likened to lions, as לֹא נִפְרְדּוּ (2 Sam 1:23).

²⁷ Of interest is Job 14:15 where the G of כָּסַף refers to God’s desire to relate to creation.

²⁸ HALOT 1:310.

²⁹ Jer 16:16 may allude to leonine imagery in its discussion of “many hunters” (רַבִּים לְרִידִים), who will hunt “them” (i.e., Israel; see 16:14-15) from every mountain (הָר) and every hill (גִּבְעָה) and out of the clefts of the rocks (וּמִנְקִי הַסֻּלְעִים). For רַבִּים and גִּבְעָה in connection with the lion, see 6.D.6-7 below. Note also that some commentators believe that the hunters are the Babylonians (see William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986], 479, who compares Lam 4:18-19; contrast Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1-25* [WBC 26; Dallas: Word, 1991], 218). For the lion in Babylonian materials see Chapter 4. Be that as it may, the evocation of lion imagery here—if present at all—is minor at best.

- 2) מִצֵּא (“to find”). מִצֵּא is used of the lion finding its victim in 1 Kgs 13:24 and 20:36. In both cases it is connected with killing.³⁰
- 3) פָּקַד (“to single out”). Jer 49:19 and 50:44 use פָּקַד to specify the singling out (i.e., hunting) of prey.³¹

C. Waiting/Lurking/Hiding (for Prey).

- 1) בָּטַח (“to wait”). Prov 28:1 states that the righteous wait like a lion. Though the imagery here may not be waiting for prey,³² the term can nevertheless be included here because of the related terms in this subdomain.
- 2) אָרַב (“to lurk”).³³ The lion lurks in secret in order to seize in Ps 10:9 (twice).³⁴ אָרַב is also often used of enemies lying in wait. Two examples of such that might evoke lion imagery are Ps 59:3³⁵ and Lam 4:19.³⁶ In both cases, however, certainty is precluded. A clearer example is Micah 7:2:³⁷
 *Micah 7:2: “The faithful have disappeared from the land, there is no one who is upright. All of them lurk for blood. Each hunts his brother with a net.”³⁸
- 3) יָשַׁב (“to lie [in wait]”). The lion lies in its hiding place (בְּמוֹסְתָיִם; see 6.B.5 below) in Ps 17:12. The activity is related to hunting as is clear from the parallelism. Additionally, *Job 38:40 (see 2.C.2 above) uses a highly similar idiom.

D. Chasing/Driving.

- 1) נָדַח (“to drive” H). Lions drive the hunted sheep that is Israel in Jer 50:17. No clear additional instances of lion imagery with נָדַח are

³⁰ Cf. also the N stem in Isa 35:9 though the context does not refer to the hunt.

³¹ See Appendix 3 for these texts. This interpretation of פָּקַד is influenced by Holladay; it has the merit of reflecting the typical situation when lions attack a herd of beasts, eventually singling one out for the kill. See George B. Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion: A Study of Predator-Prey Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 240-51.

³² Cf. NRSV: “as bold as a lion.”

³³ See also the noun (“lair”) in 6.B.2 below.

³⁴ Note Lam 3:10 where the bear is described similarly and in parallel with the lion. The participle may well serve both clauses: “He is a lurking bear to me, a lion (lurking) in hiding.”

³⁵ Here enemies lie in wait (אָרְבּוּ) for the psalmist’s life. Later, the psalmists calls these enemies dogs (Ps 59:7, 15), but abrupt shifts in animal imagery within particular psalms is not uncommon (cf. Psalm 22). Still, there is not enough confluence of additional lion imagery to designate this as a clear instance of such.

³⁶ This passage, like 2 Sam 1:23, also connects the eagle and the lion. Yet, while הָרַר is used with the lion, neither מְדַבֵּר nor דִּלֵּק is attested with any of the lion terms.

³⁷ But even here we may have a mixture of metaphors: animal predation combined with humans hunting animals.

³⁸ Hans Walter Wolff, *Micah: A Commentary* (CC; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990), 200, 201 n. 2c, and 206 thinks this is a hunt “to death” (הָרַם), especially because of the Versions and the syntax.

evident, and the term can be used of other entities, including the shepherd (e.g., Jer 23:2). Still, it is notable that נדח (in H) is often found with reference to the activity of enemies, deceivers, or disreputable persons (see, e.g., Deut 13:6, 11, 14; 2 Kgs 17:21; so also Jer 23:2). It is also often applied to Yahweh driving persons to places (e.g., Israel into exile). See Deut 30:1; Jer 8:3, 16:15, 23:3, 8, 24:9, 27:10, 15; etc.³⁹

- 2) רוץ ("to chase" H). In the hunt described in Jer 49:19 and 50:44, Yahweh is like a lion chasing the sucklings of the flock.
- 3) רגע ("to hurriedly do something" H). In Jer 49:19 and 50:44, רגע is combined with רוץ, apparently to indicate the speed of the action. Of interest, though not completely leonine in tenor, are Isa 51:15 and Jer 31:35, both of which depict Yahweh stirring up the sea so its waves roar (רגע הים ויהמו גליו).

E. Taking/Grabbing/Seizing/Dragging Off (Prey).

- 1) אחז ("to seize"). Somewhat surprisingly, אחז with reference to the seizing of prey occurs only once, in Isa 5:29.
- 2) חטף ("to seize"). Ps 10:9 twice uses חטף to describe the seizing of the poor by the lion-like wicked.
- 3) לכד ("to capture"). Amos 3:4 uses לכד with reference to a lion not having prey.
- 4) פלט ("to carry off" H). Used in Isa 5:29 in parallel with the seizing of prey. Perhaps the image is related to the lion's tendency to drag prey away from the site of the kill before consuming it so as to remove it from other predators.⁴⁰
- 5) נשא ("to carry off"). נשא is the verb associated with carrying off, whether the prey is expressed, as in 1 Sam 17:34 (a sheep from the flock), or unexpressed, as in Hos 5:14.
- 6) פרק ("to tear apart, away").⁴¹ Ps 7:3 utilizes פרק with the same sense as 3.E.1 and 3.E.2 above. Additionally, Nah 3:1 uses the nominal form to designate spoil (// טרף, "prey"):

*Nah 3:1: "Ah! City of blood, completely deceitful, full of booty, (with) no end to the prey."

פרק is also employed in Zechariah 11 in its description of an (anti-)shepherd, who is described with terms also used in other lion passages.⁴² Perhaps most interesting in connection with lion imagery is the object of פרק: the hooves.⁴³

³⁹ Cf. also the prayer for Yahweh to drive away enemies in Ps 5:11.

⁴⁰ See Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 267-68 who notes that this is the case especially with small prey or pieces of larger prey (up to 40 kilograms), though he also recounts lions moving zebras and wildebeests over large distances (20-160 meters). On this point the saving sense of פלט H in Micah 6:14 might be compared though the text there is highly controverted (see the commentators).

⁴¹ פרק might also be considered with the terms in Domain 4.

⁴² Notably אכל and שבר. Cf. also Ezek 34:1-16 for a passage that is not unrelated. It figures Yahweh as a shepherd who turns against the shepherds of his people who have, for their

*Zech 11:16: “For I am about to raise up a shepherd in the land. He will not consider the destroyed, nor seek out the scattered.⁴⁴ Neither will he heal the broken nor nourish the healthy. But he will devour the flesh of the fat (ones)—he will rend even their hooves!”

- 7) מִשֵּׁךְ (“to drag”). The wicked one who seizes the poor in Ps 10:9 drags the poor into his net. The combination with רָשַׁת along with an atypical verb for dragging—at least for lions (see above)—may indicate that, with מִשֵּׁךְ, the metaphor has shifted and the dominant vehicle in the metaphor is no longer the lion. If so, מִשֵּׁךְ would not comprise part of the lion repertoire proper. But see 3.J.6 below (on רָשַׁת).

F. Breaking/Harming/Trampling.

- 1) שָׁבַר (“to break/attack”). שָׁבַר refers to a lion attack (or lack thereof) in 1 Kgs 13:26 (conjoined with מוֹת) and 13:28 (with אָכַל). Isa 38:13 uses שָׁבַר in conjunction with the breaking of bones (Hezekiah’s prayer).⁴⁵ Additionally, Lam 3:4 attributes the breaking of bones to God. Conversely, Yahweh’s protection of the righteous in Ps 34:21 is described as keeping their bones from being broken. In both cases, it seems that lion imagery may be present, though this is less clear in the latter case.

*Lam 3:4: “He [Yahweh] has made my flesh and my skin waste away. He has broken my bones.”⁴⁶

*Ps 34:21: “He [Yahweh] keeps all of his [the righteous] bones, not one of them will be broken.”⁴⁷

- 2) דָּקַק (“to break”). Dan 6:25 uses דָּקַק along with bones (נְרִמִּין) in the Aramaic equivalent of Hebrew עֲצָם + שָׁבַר (see Isa 38:13).⁴⁸
- 3) רָעַע (“to hurt” H). The lion is among the animals that will not do any harm on Yahweh’s mountain (Isa 65:25).
- 4) רָמַס (“to trample”). The lion tramples the flock as it passes through (Micah 5:7). The term is not specific to the lion as it can be used

part, become predators (חַיֵּית הַשָּׂדֶה, vv. 5, 8) insofar as Yahweh must rescue the people from their mouths (v. 10).

⁴³ For the feeding habits of lions on prey see Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 268-71, 275-79. Lions will consume almost every part of a carcass but will often discard the hooves of their prey (ibid., 271). In the case of the shepherd of Zechariah 11, he is either a very hungry lion or much worse (!) than the average lion.

⁴⁴ Following Syr; cf. LXX and Vulg. MT reads “the young” (הַנְּעָר). Given the context, an N participle is to be expected. See K. Elliger in *BHS*.

⁴⁵ Cf. 1QH 13.7.

⁴⁶ Cf. also, perhaps, Ps 51:10.

⁴⁷ Cf. also Ps 3:8, which states that Yahweh broke the teeth of the wicked enemies of the psalmist. See 1.B.6 above and, further, Hackett and Huehnergard, “On Breaking Teeth,” 259-75.

⁴⁸ The use of דָּקַק in Dan 7:7, 19, and 23 may lend leonine traits to the fourth beast from the sea, but it is certainly a composite (*Mischwesen*).

with reference to horses (2 Kgs 9:33; Ezek 26:11) or the generic חיה השדה (2 Kgs 14:9//2 Chr 25:18). In the latter case, however, the wild animal is a metaphor by which King Jehoash refers to himself, and, given the royal connections of the lion, leonine imagery might be implied.⁴⁹ Of course, the term can also be used without reference to the animal world, as in Isa 63:3.

Additionally, given the presence of lion imagery in Ps 7:3, the trampling referred to in Ps 7:6 might also be associated with the lion.

*Ps 7:6: “(Then) let the enemy pursue my life and overtake (me),⁵⁰ let him trample my life on the ground and lay my glory in the dust. Selah.”⁵¹

- 5) חבל (“to hurt”). Dan 6:23 employs חבלי negatively (ולא חבליני) to indicate that the lions did not hurt Daniel.

G. Ripping/Tearing/Scratching.

- 1) טרף (“to rip”); טרפה/טרף (“prey, ripped animal/thing”). The root occurs 58 times. Of these, the noun is found with the lion 13 times (Gen 49:9; Num 23:24; Isa 5:29, 31:4; Ezek 19:3, 6; 22:25; Amos 3:4; Nah 2:13-14; Job 4:11, 38:39; Ps 104:21) while 10 instances of the verb are associated directly with the lion (Deut 33:20; Ezek 19:3, 6; 22:25; Hos 5:14; Micah 5:7; Nah 2:13; Pss 7:3, 17:12, 22:14). The graphic nature of the ripping of the prey is amply illustrated by Amos 3:12.

Of course, the fact that there are still 35 additional instances of טרף/טרפה indicates that these are fairly common terms used to refer to the ripping of anything, including leaves (Gen 8:11; Ezek 17:9).⁵² Nevertheless, such ripping is particularly common of wild animals that are carnivorous (but cf. Job 24:5). Even this latter category includes more animals than just the lion, however, as demonstrated by Gen 49:27, Ezek 22:27 (of wolves) and, perhaps, Jer 5:6 (of a leopard; but also present are the lion and wolf). Hence, additional examples of leonine imagery can only be tentatively identified.

These can be organized in thematic subcategories:

- a. *Of Lion (?) in the Wild.* Twice Joseph is described as torn and devoured by a beast of the field (Gen 37:33, 44:28). There seem to be connections with the legal material in Exod 22:12 (cf. also

⁴⁹ Note the reference to the one from the north (Cyrus) who tramples on rulers in Isa 41:25. Here again the iconography is illustrative. See Chapters 3 and 4.

⁵⁰ Cf. Syr, which reads a 3fs suffix.

⁵¹ See Norbert Lohfink, “Ps 7,2-6—vom Löwen gejagt,” in *Die Freude an Gott—unsere Kraft: Festschrift für Otto Bernhard Knoch zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Johannes Joachim Degenhardt; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991), 60-67, who also sees lion imagery in v. 6.

⁵² Note also the references to טרפה in cultic-ritual contexts (Exod 22:30; Lev 7:24, 17:15, 22:8; Ezek 4:14, 44:31).

Gen 31:39 and Amos 3:12) and all three texts may allude to destruction at the hand of the lion (cf. Chapter 5 §5.2).

- i. *Gen 37:33: “And he [Jacob] recognized it and he said, ‘It is the garment of my son! A wild animal has devoured him. Joseph is ripped to shreds!’”
- ii. *Gen 44:28: “And one departed from me and I said, ‘Surely he is ripped to shreds.’ And I have not seen him since.”
- iii. *Exod 22:12: “If it (the animal) was utterly ripped apart, he shall bring it as evidence. In the case of the mangled carcass, he will not make restitution.”

b. *Of/Associated with God.*

- i. *Hos 6:1: “Come, let us return to Yahweh, for he has torn (us), but he will heal us. He has struck (us), but he will bind us up.”
- ii. Job 16:9: “(In) his wrath he has torn (me), and hated me. He has gnashed his teeth. My adversary sharpens his eyes against me.”
- iii. *Ps 50:22: “Consider this, those who forget God, lest I tear you apart with no deliverer.”
- iv. *Ps 76:5: “You are glorious, more majestic than the mountains of prey.”⁵³
- v. *Ps 111:5: “He provides prey for those who fear him. He forever remembers his covenant.”⁵⁴

c. *Of Wicked/Unrighteous.*

- i. *Nah 3:1 (see 3.E.6 above).⁵⁵

⁵³ The NRSV follows LXX (ὁράων αἰώνων) and translates: “everlasting mountains.” Correcting MT’s מְהַרְרֵי־טָרֶף to מְהַרְרֵי־עַד is possible (so BDB 383), but so also is HALOT’s proposal (2:380; following Ehrlich) that MT should read מְהַרְרֵי טָרֶף “more majestic than a ripping lion.” MT might be retained in the light of Song 4:8 which describes the mountains of Senir and Hermon as the dens of lions. Cf. BDB 383: “*mountains of prey* (the lion’s lair).” So also NJPSV (Tanakh).

⁵⁴ Here טָרֶף may simply be a term for food. Cf. the similar use of טָרֶף in Prov 30:8 (verb), Mal 3:10 (noun), and Prov 31:15 (noun). HALOT 2:380 sees in the verb at Prov 30:8 a “weakened” sense, but the (probable) late dating of the Proverbs and Malachi texts makes one wonder if Psalm 111 ought not be dated similarly (see Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Continental Commentary* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 357-58). Still, texts such as Nah 2:13 that describe the lion providing prey for cubs should give one pause before eliminating these texts too quickly from consideration. Certainly, there were terms available that were frequently used to refer generically to “food” (e.g., לֶחֶם, אֹכֶל/אִכְלָה, אָכַל). Whatever the case, Kaplan’s argument (“The Lion,” 66) that, because טָרֶף in Prov 31:15 is not clearly leonine in referent it must then follow that כִּפִּיר in Nah 2:14 is not a reference to a lion strains credulity. Kaplan may be right about Prov 31:15, but is hardly correct about כִּפִּיר in Nahum 2. See further Appendix 1.

⁵⁵ Cf. also the use of בָּז (“plunder”) in Jer 2:14. Here the term does not refer to the prey of animals, but it is connected—metaphorically at least (see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 93)—to the leonine metaphor in 2:15. Cf. also Ezek 34:8.

- ii. *Job 18:4: “You who tear yourself in your anger, should the earth be forsaken on your account or the rock moved from its place?”⁵⁶
- iii. *Job 29:17 (see 1.B.7 above).
- iv. *Ps 124:6: “Blessed be Yahweh who has not given us as prey to their teeth.”
- 2) קרע (“to tear open”). Yahweh will tear open the covering of Israel’s heart (Hos 13:8).⁵⁷
- 3) פשח (“to tear to pieces” D). Yahweh, the lion, has torn the lamenter in Lamentations 3:
 - *Lam 3:11: “He turned me from my way and tore me to pieces. He left me devastated.”

H. Killing.

- 1) נכה (“to strike/kill” H). Twice in 1 Kgs 20:36 and once in Jer 5:6 the H of נכה is equivalent to מות (H).
- 2) מות (“to kill” H). The H of מות is used to describe the lion’s killing of victims in 1 Kgs 13:24, 26; and 2 Kgs 17:26.
- 3) הרג (“to kill”). The lions of Samaria are described as killers (הרגנים) in 2 Kgs 17:25.
- 4) רצח (“to kill”). The N of רצח is employed in Prov 22:13 to describe what will happen to the sluggard if he encounters the lion.
- 5) שלט (“to overpower”). Dan 6:25 uses שלט to describe how the lions destroyed those who slandered Daniel along with their families.
- 6) שחת (“to destroy” H). The lion is among the animals who will not destroy on Yahweh’s mountain (Isa 65:25).
- 7) חנק (“to strangle” D). Nah 2:13 describes how the lion strangles prey for its lionesses; this is an accurate reference to the way lions often kill their prey—namely, by asphyxiation.⁵⁸
- 8) שלם (“to finish/bring to an end” H). Isa 38:12 utilizes שלם, perhaps to metaphorically describe the destruction of Hezekiah, though here the reference probably has more to do with God (the referent of the metaphor) than the lion (the vehicle).⁵⁹
- 9) מלא (“to fill” D). Nah 2:13 describes how the lion fills its caves with prey and its dens with torn flesh.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Note that this is Bildad’s response to Job’s previous speech in which he likened God to a lion who had ripped him (Job 16:9; see 3.G.1.b.ii above).

⁵⁷ It is possible that קרע here refers back to the bear of Hos 13:8a and not to the lion of 13:8b. Similarly, בקע later in 13:8b may include the lion but could just as well be restricted to the חית השדה.

⁵⁸ See the discussion of Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 265-66 who points out that lions often kill large species by strangulation and/or suffocation. 2 Sam 17:23 confirms that the D of חנק includes asphyxiation.

⁵⁹ Cf. Isa 38:12 and the similar use in Isa 44:26, 28; and Job 23:14.

⁶⁰ The parallel line may indicate that this activity has to do with provision for young. See Domain 8 below.

I. Rescue/Deliverance from the Lion. Elements in this subdomain are actually antonymic to the lion's hunting, killing, or eating. Also included here, however, is a combination that is used to eliminate any possibility of rescue (אין מצייל).

- 1) מן + נצל ("to deliver from"). This combination is used with reference to shepherds delivering prey from the lion (Amos 3:12, with פה) and to a shepherd being delivered from the lion (1 Sam 17:37, with יד). Additionally, *1 Sam 17:35 (see 1.B.4 above) depicts David delivering prey from the mouth of the lion.
- 2) אין + נצל ("there is no deliverance/deliverer"). The syntagma אין מצייל appears frequently in lion passages (Isa 5:29; Hos 5:14; Micah 5:7; Ps 7:3) and this naturally raises the question of whether it might be used elsewhere with leonine evocation.⁶¹ Still, the general sense of the combination, along with its use in battle-conflict scenes (e.g., Judg 18:28, 2 Sam 14:6, Isa 42:22),⁶² legal contexts (Job 5:4, 10:7),⁶³ and with different animals (Dan 8:4),⁶⁴ indicates that the syntagma must be combined with other elements to evoke the lion explicitly. Even so, two additional passages commend themselves as perhaps utilizing אין מצייל to evoke lion imagery:
 *Ps 50:22 (see 3.G.1.b.iii above) uses this terminology of God along with other leonine vocabulary.⁶⁵
 *Ps 71:11: "They [the enemies] say: 'God has forsaken him. Pursue him and seize him for there is no deliverer.'"⁶⁶
- 3) שוב ("to deliver" H). Ps 35:17 uses the H of שוב for deliverance from the lion.
- 4) שזב ("to deliver"). שזב is the term utilized in Dan 6:17, 21, and 28 to describe Daniel's miraculous deliverance from the lions.

J. Hunting the Lion. Included in this category are both phrases used to describe when one encounters the lion in an offensive fashion, as well as the various tools or methods by which the lion is hunted or captured.

- 1) על + נקרא ("to be called out against"). Shepherds are called out (N) against the lion of Isa 31:4. Despite their shouting and noise (קול and המון, respectively), the lion is not deterred from its prey.

⁶¹ Note that it also underscores the pitiful deliverance of Amos 3:12.

⁶² Judg 18:28 does include a reference to the GN Laish. See Appendix 1.

⁶³ Perhaps one should compare also the use of מושיע + אין in Deut 28:29, 31.

⁶⁴ Though other literature shows that, at least in apocalyptic contexts, non-lion animals (e.g., the lamb of the Apocalypse) can be "lionized" (I am indebted to James F. Kay, *Seasons of Grace: Reflections from the Christian Year* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994], 71 for this terminology). Note also Dan 8:7 where similar sentiment is found with reference to the goat.

⁶⁵ Cf. also Deut 32:39, Job 10:7, and Isa 43:13 which use אין מצייל to describe how there is no deliverance from God's hand. Cf. Hos 2:12 and note Ps 35:10 where God is the מצייל.

⁶⁶ The "lionization" of the enemies here is at best implicit.

- 2) **יָצָא + אַחֲרַי** (“to go out after”). In *1 Sam 17:35 (see 1.B.4 above), David uses this syntagma to describe his action after a lion (or bear) had taken a sheep from the flock.
- 3) **חָזַק** (“to seize” with **בְּ**). When David recounts his encounter with the offending lion (or bear) this is the terminology used for the actual conflict (*1 Sam 17:35; see 1.B.4 above).
- 4) **בָּוֵא** (“to bring” H). The H of **בָּוֵא** is used to describe how the lion of Ezekiel 19 was brought before the monarchs of Egypt and Babylon. This form is often used of kings or usurpers who are brought before the main power (see, e.g., Jer 52:11), and this further underscores the metaphorical nature of Ezekiel 19.

*Ezek 19:4: “The nations heard of him, he was caught in their pit. They brought him with hooks to the land of Egypt.”

*Ezek 19:9: “With hooks they put him into the cage and they brought him to the king of Babylon and they took him into custody so that his voice would no longer be heard on the mountains of Israel.”

- 5) **פָּרַשׁ** (“to spread”). **פָּרַשׁ** is used with “net” (see 3.J.6 below) to describe the manner in which the lion of Ezekiel 19 is caught.

*Ezek 19:8: “And the nations set upon him from all around the provinces. They spread their net over him. He was caught in their pit.”

The spreading of a net is also found in less specific contexts. For instance, the wicked spread a net for the psalmist (Ps 140:6) and Yahweh brings Ephraim down like a bird by casting a net (Hos 7:12).⁶⁷ Still, the vocabulary links between Ezek 12:13 and 17:20 with Ezekiel 19 and the context of Ezek 32:3 indicate that lion imagery is probably being drawn upon in these verses as well. In each case, the hunter is Yahweh.

*Ezek 12:13: “I will spread out my net over him and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, but he will not see it. And he will die there.”

*Ezek 17:20: “I will spread my net over him and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and I will enter into judgment with him there concerning the treason he perpetrated against me.”

*Ezek 32:3: “Thus says the Lord Yahweh: I will spread my net over you in the congregation of many peoples and they⁶⁸ will haul you up in my net.”

- 6) **רֶשֶׁת** (“net”).⁶⁹ Of the lion passages, **רֶשֶׁת** is found at Ps 10:9, and at *Ezek 19:8 (see 3.J.5 above). Additional allusions to lion imagery may be found in Job 18:8,⁷⁰ though the passage may be a hybrid of

⁶⁷ Cf. also Lam 1:13.

⁶⁸ LXX and Vulg read a 1st person verb. So also NRSV.

⁶⁹ See also 3.J.5 above.

⁷⁰ See the discussion of Job 18:4 in 3.G.1.c.ii above.

generalized animal-hunting language.⁷¹ The same might be said for Ps 9:16 and how Yahweh saves from the net in Pss 25:15 and 31:5. Nevertheless, these passages are provided here.

*Job 18:8: “For he [the wicked] is cast into a net by his own feet, he walks onto a trap.”

*Ps 9:16: “The nations have sunk into the pit that they made, their foot has been caught in the net that they hid.”

*Ps 25:15: “My eyes are always on Yahweh, for he will deliver my feet from the net.”

*Ps 31:5: “Deliver me from the net which they hid for me, for you are my refuge.”

A similar situation is found in Psalms 35 and 57, though additional lion terminology is found here (note especially Pss 35:17; 57:5) thus making the connection more secure.

*Ps 35:7-8: “For no reason they hid their net for me, for no reason they dug a pit⁷² for my life. May ruin come upon him unawares; and his net which he hid—may it capture him! May he fall into it for (his) ruin.”⁷³

*Ps 57:7: “They set a net for my steps, my soul was bowed down. They dug a pit before me, they fell into its midst. Selah.”

Note also *Ezek 12:13, *17:20, and *32:3 (see 3.J.5 above).

- 7) חֶרֶם (“net”). This term, found in *Ezek 32:3 (see 3.J.5 above), is also used of bloodthirsty hunters in *Micah 7:2 (see 3.C.2 above), perhaps with leonine undertones.
- 8) שַׁחַת (“pit”). The lion of Ezekiel 19 is caught in a pit, and this term is also found in other passages already discussed above: *Ezek 19:4 (see 3.J.4 above); *Ezek 19:8 (see 3.J.5 above); *Ps 9:16 (see 3.J.6 above); *Ps 35:7 (see 3.J.6 above); *Ps 57:7 (see 3.J.6 above).⁷⁴ Additional passages similar to the many already encountered from the Psalms are found in Psalms 7 and 94:⁷⁵

*Ps 7:16: “He [the evildoer] digs a pit and hollows it out. He falls into the pit that he made.”

*Ps 94:13: “In order to give him rest from days of trouble until a pit is dug for the wicked.”
- 9) סוּגָר (“cage”). The lion of Ezekiel 19 is finally imprisoned in a סוּגָר (*Ezek 19:9; see 3.J.4 above).
- 10) תַּפְּשׁ (“to be caught” N). Found at *Ezek 19:4, 8 (see 3.J.4-5 above).

⁷¹ For ancient Near Eastern examples of hunting with the net, see Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 395.

⁷² Transposing שַׁחַת and רֶשֶׁת with Syr (see H. Bardtke in *BHS*). So also NRSV; NJPSV (Tanakh).

⁷³ Cf. also Ps 140:6.

⁷⁴ With שִׁיחָה; both terms are derived from שׁוּחַ by BDB (1001).

⁷⁵ Perhaps one should also include Lam 4:20 where Yahweh's anointed (מְשִׁיחַ) is captured in “their pits” (בְּשַׁחֲיוֹתָם). Cf. also 3.C.2 above on Lam 4:19.

- 11) חֶח ("hook"). Hooks are used to bring the two lions of *Ezek 19:4 and *19:9 (see 3.J.4 above) to their various destinations (Egypt and Babylon, respectively). The image would seem to be the nose-ring (cf. Akk *erretu*). See Chapter 4 and note 2 Kgs 19:28//Isa 37:29, where Yahweh puts a חֶח in the nose of Sennacherib.⁷⁶
- 12) עָל + נָתַן ("to set upon"). This formulation is found in Ezek 19:8.

K. Hurting/Dominating/Killing the Lion.

- 1) נָתַץ ("to break"). נָתַץ is the verb used to describe the psalmist's wish that the fangs of the young lions be broken (Ps 58:7).⁷⁷ The term is typically used for the tearing down of altars, walls, houses, etc.
- 2) נָתַע ("to break"). The roar, voice, and teeth of the lions are broken (נָתַעו) in Job 4:10.⁷⁸
- 3) הָרַס ("to rip out"). Ps 58:7 implores God to rip out the teeth of the lion.
- 4) עָל + דָּרַךְ ("to tread upon"). The iconography discussed in Chapters 3-4 demonstrates that the animal that is ridden upon—no matter how fearsome or strong—is dominated. Such is the case with the lion of Ps 91:13.⁷⁹
- 5) רָמַס ("to trample"). The lion is trampled (עָל + דָּרַךְ) in Ps 91:13.
- 6) סָגַר ("to shut"). The lions of Daniel 6 are dominated or conquered by having their mouths shut (Dan 6:23).
- 7) נָכַח ("to strike/kill" H). נָכַח in the H is used of David's slaying of the lion (1 Sam 17:36) and is also used of Benaiah's exploits against the lion and the two Ariels of Moab (2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22). The term is also found twice in *1 Sam 17:35 (see 1.B.4 above).
- 8) מוֹת ("to die" G; "to kill" H). The G participle of מוֹת describes the dead lion of Eccl 9:4. David's exploits in *1 Sam 17:35 (see 1.B.4 above) involved killing a lion (מוֹת H).
- 9) שָׁבַר ("to break"). Utilized in *Job 29:17 (see 1.B.7 above).

Perhaps one could also include in this subdomain שָׁטַע ("to tear apart" D), the verb used to describe Samson's victory over the lion in Judg 14:6. However, as that action is immediately described as כָּשַׁטַע הַנָּדִי, it seems to have more to do with the נָדִי than the lion.

DOMAIN 4: EATING

See also Domain 3 above, as the domains are closely related at several points.

⁷⁶ See also Ezek 29:4 (against Pharaoh as a crocodile) and 38:4 (against Gog).

⁷⁷ Note Dahood's treatment of this verb ("The Etymology of *MAL TA'OT*," 180-83).

⁷⁸ See Dahood's comment on this verse, cited above in note 17.

⁷⁹ Cf. Job 28:8 where the לֹא־הִדְרִיכֶהוּ בְנֵי שֹׁחַץ have not trodden (לֹא־הִדְרִיכֶהוּ) the path.

A. Chewing/Biting/Gnawing.

- 1) עָצַם (“to gnaw” D). עָצַם is found with this connotation only in Jer 50:17.
- 2) גָּרַם (“to gnaw”). Found in the famous crux at Zeph 3:3. Additionally, the verb is used in Numbers 24, immediately before the lion of 24:9 is mentioned:
 *Num 24:8: “The God who brought him from Egypt is like the horns of the wild ox for him. He will devour the nations that are his foes and will gnaw their bones. He will strike with his arrows.”

B. Eating/Food.

- 3) אָכַל (“to eat”). This extremely frequent verb is also the main word used to describe the lion’s eating habits (e.g., Num 23:24; cf. *Gen 37:33 [see 3.G.a.i above]). The frequency of the term and its natural application to the lion is what lends special force to several passages. For instance, the fact that the lion eats in Isa 11:7 and 65:25 is not strange in the least; it is the *object of the eating* (חֵבֶל, “straw”) that upsets the reader’s expectation and highlights the marked difference that will be found in the eschatological situation. Usually the object of the lion’s eating is live prey of some sort, including (in metaphors) Israel (Jer 2:30, 50:17; Hos 13:8) and human life (Ezek 19:3, 6, 22:25).

Perhaps it is the frequent combination of the lion with eating that makes Samson’s riddle so tantalizingly elusive. Whatever the case, the answer (Judg 14:18) indicates that הָאֹכֵל is the lion—at least in this case.⁸⁰

- *Judg 14:14: “And he said to them: ‘Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong one came something sweet.’ And they were unable to declare the riddle for three days.”
- 4) <נָרָא> (“to grow fat”). For the emendation see Appendix 3. The term is found in Isa 11:6.
- 5) אָכַל (“food”). This noun occurs in Ps 104:21, which describes how lions seek their food from God.

C. Drinking.

- 1) שָׁתָה (“to drink”). שָׁתָה is used in Num 23:24 with רָם. Elsewhere, the combination is used of wild animals and birds in general (Ezek 39:17, 19).

⁸⁰ Cf. KB 43, 1202; HALOT 1:46. Arabic *ʾakal* (“eater”) was also an epithet for the lion (see Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament: A Comparative Study with Chapters from Sir James G. Frazer’s Folklore in the Old Testament* [2 vols.; New York: Harper & Row, 1975], 2:436 and 2:536 n. 17).

D. Not Eating.

- 1) לֹא אֵכֵל (“to not eat”). The common occurrence of the lion’s eating (see 4.B.1 above), is what makes the behavior of the lion in 1 Kgs 13:28 so odd.
- 2) רָעַשׁ (“to be impoverished”). Ps 34:11 uses רָעַשׁ, a common term for the poor and needy, with reference to the lion.
- 3) רָעַב (“to be hungry”). Employed in Ps 34:11. The term is often applied in stereotypical fashion to the wicked and unrighteous.⁸¹
- 4) אָבַד (“to perish”). The context of Job 4:11 clarifies that the perishing there has to do with the lack of food (מִבְּלִי-טָרֶף). Apparently, then, the lion is dying of starvation.

DOMAIN 5: VOCALIZATION

Biblical Hebrew uses at least nine terms for the lion’s vocalization. While at first this seems excessive, it may reflect zoological reality as Schaller’s field work with the Serengeti lions catalogued “at least nine more or less distinct expressions” that comprise the lion’s communicative repertoire.⁸² Only one of these vocalizations is the full roar, an activity that is “not displayed until subadulthood” or approximately two-and-a-half years of age.⁸³ It may very well be the case, therefore, that the Hebrew vocabulary is reflecting nuances and subtleties apparent only from first-hand experiences with the lion. Unfortunately, such nuances are no longer clear enough to the contemporary reader to categorize distinctly, though approximate English equivalents like “roar,” “growl,” “mutter,” and so forth might be on the right track. Be that as it may, as no definitive categorization can be made in this domain, the terms are organized into two broad groups: single-word and compound terms. Within these groups, the terms are ordered roughly according to frequency.

A. Single-Word Terms.

- 1) שָׁאַן (“to roar”). In lion passages, the verb is found in Judg 14:5; Isa 5:29; Jer 2:15, 51:38; Ezek 22:25; Hos 11:10; Amos 3:4, 8; Zeph 3:3; Pss 22:14, and 104:21. The noun שֹׁאֵן is present at Isa 5:29; Zech 11:3; and Job 4:10. The verb and the noun, taken together, occur 13 more times in the Hebrew Bible and, while they seem to be distinctively leonine lexemes, a look at their use in the Psalms warrants caution on this point. Pss 22:2 and 32:3 use the noun and Ps 38:9 (so also Job 3:24) uses the verb to describe the groaning of the psalmist (or one in distress). But even at these points the term

⁸¹ On 4.D.2 and 4.D.3, cf. Prov 10:3 which states that Yahweh does not let the righteous go hungry but thwarts the craving of the wicked. For more on the use of the lion as a metaphor for the wicked in Ps 34:11, see J. J. M. Roberts, “The Young Lions of Psalm 34:11,” *Bib* 54 (1973): 265-67.

⁸² Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, 103.

⁸³ *Ibid.* and 107.

might have leonine connotations, especially where the lion appears in the immediate context (cf. Ps 22:14, 22).⁸⁴ In such cases—and perhaps in others—the words might be onomatopoeic. That is, what the sufferer does in their distress (i.e., their groaning) is similar to the sound of the lion’s roar⁸⁵ or perhaps to the actual phonetic equivalent: *šag/šgâ*. Alternatively, the use of שֹׁאֵן/שֹׁאֵה in these contexts could be unrelated to the lion.⁸⁶

Whatever the case, several additional passages use this terminology in contexts that are clearly utilizing lion imagery:⁸⁷

*Jer 25:30: “You will prophesy to them all these words and say to them: Yahweh roars from on high and from his holy habitation he utters his voice. He roars mightily against his pasture; he shouts like those who tread on grapes against all the inhabitants of the earth.”⁸⁸

*Ezek 19:7: “And he raped its widows and destroyed their cities; the land and everything in it were appalled at the sound of his roar.”⁸⁹

*Joel 4:16: “And Yahweh roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem. Heaven and earth shake—but Yahweh is a refuge for his people and a stronghold for the children of Israel.”

*Amos 1:2: “And he [Amos] said: Yahweh roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem. The pastures of the shepherds dry up, and the top of Carmel withers.”

*Ps 74:4: “Your foes have roared in the midst of your appointed place, they have set up their signs as signs (there).”

*Job 37:4: “After it (his)⁹⁰ voice roars, he thunders with his exalted voice. He does not restrain them [the lightnings] when his voice is heard.”⁹¹

⁸⁴ Cf. Zech 11:3 which uses שֹׁאֵן to describe how lions bemoan the destruction of the “pride” (נִאֲוִן; see 6.D.1 below) of the Jordan.

⁸⁵ Though here the particular leonine vocalization would probably not be the full-throated roar. It is more likely that it would correspond to one of the other vocalizations noted by Schaller (*The Serengeti Lion*, 103).

⁸⁶ E.g., there could be two homonymous roots: I שֹׁאֵן “to roar” and II שֹׁאֵן “to groan.” In light of the above discussion, this option seems the less likely. Even if it were the case, however, both terms could easily be applied to the lion while II שֹׁאֵן would be restricted to human vocalization(s).

⁸⁷ Some of these are related to passages listed in Appendix 3; they either introduce or continue the lion metaphor of these passages.

⁸⁸ The lion allusion here becomes explicit in Jer 25:38. But note also the wailing of the shepherds and “lords of the flock” in Jer 25:35-36 and compare Zech 11:3.

⁸⁹ William H. Brownlee’s emendations (*Ezekiel 1-19* [WBC 28; Waco: Word, 1986], 295 n. 7a; see also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 389 n. 7a), while creative, are too complex to be deemed probable. Sense can be made of the MT as it stands.

⁹⁰ A few Hebrew manuscripts read קוֹלֵי, making the suffix explicit.

⁹¹ Note Kennedy’s conclusions regarding רָעַם and שֹׁאֵן in “The Root *G/R*,” 47-64.

- 2) נהם (“to growl/roar”). נהם is the term used for growling/roaring in Isa 5:29; Prov 19:12, 20:2, 28:15.⁹² A similar situation to that of נאנ obtains for נהם: this term is also used of the groaning of one in distress or pain (Ezek 24:23; Ps 38:9; Prov 5:11). The only certain additional reference, therefore, is Isa 5:30 which continues the reference to the lion in 5:29:

*Isa 5:30: “And he [the nation] will roar over it on that day like the roaring of the sea. And he will look to the land—and behold: distressing darkness and (the) light grows dark with clouds.”

- 3) הוֹם/הִנָּה/הוֹם (“to roar”). All of these terms are probably related, together with נהם.⁹³ הוֹם is not one of the typical “roaring” words, but the emendation to a participial form of הוֹם at Isa 30:6 involves only repointing the consonantal text of MT.⁹⁴ In general, these terms are used for great noise or uproar (e.g., Exod 14:24; Deut 7:23; 1 Kgs 1:41, 45; Ps 46:7; Ruth 1:19) and, not unlike the vocalization terms discussed above, can also be used of distress, groaning, and so forth (e.g., Isa 22:2; Pss 39:6, 42:6, 55:3, 18). They are also used of other animals (dogs: Ps 59:7; bears: Isa 59:11; doves: Ezek 7:15) or even of the sea (e.g., Isa 17:12; Jer 31:35, 50:42). Hence, additional instances of lion imagery must remain tentative. Even so, a passage in Jeremiah commends itself as evoking the lion as part of its imagistic language.

*Jer 51:34: “Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, has devoured me,⁹⁵ he has roared (at) me.⁹⁶ He has made me an empty vessel. He has swallowed me like the dragon. He fills his belly with my <dainties>.⁹⁷ <He drives me out>.”⁹⁸

- 4) הנה (“to growl”). הנה is employed specifically with the lion in Isa 31:4. Elsewhere, the term is normally used of human subjects (muttering, uttering, meditating, mourning, etc.; e.g., Josh 1:8; Pss 1:2, 2:1, 37:30, 38:13, 63:7, 77:13; Job 27:4; cf. the book of Hagi/u in 1QSa 1.7; CD 10.6, 13:2). It is used of doves (“moaning”?) twice (Isa 38:14 and 59:11).⁹⁹ As with the other terms already encountered, הנה can be used to describe a type of sigh or

⁹² Perhaps also in Isa 30:6, depending on the emendation chosen. A participial form from הוֹם is least intrusive to the MT. See 5.A.3 below.

⁹³ See HALOT 1:242, 250, 251; 3:676.

⁹⁴ See Appendix 3. For נהם, cf. also Egyptian *hmhm.tj* (WÄS 2:491).

⁹⁵ Reading with Q here and throughout. So also LXX (με). William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 399 n. 34b moves אכל to follow “vessel.”

⁹⁶ Or: “he has discomfited me.”

⁹⁷ For the slight emendation see Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 399 n. 34d; J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 761 n. 2; W. Rudolph in *BHS*.

⁹⁸ Or: “he vomits me out” (see William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah* [2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1986-1996], 2:1322); reading the H of נרח with LXX (see Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 399 n. 34e).

⁹⁹ Isa 8:19 (ghosts and spirits that chirp and mutter) might be related.

distressful articulation (Isa 16:7; Jer 48:31; Ezek 2:10; Pss 90:9, 115:7).

Two passages from Job are helpful in clarifying the force of הנה as a roaring or growling sound. Both connect the terminology to the sound and sights of the thunderstorm and both are used of God.

*Job 37:2: “Listen closely to the thunder of his voice and to the rumbling that comes from his mouth.”

*Job 37:4 (see 5.A.1 above).

- 5) נער (“to growl”). The term is found of lions only at Jer 51:38 and there it is often emended.¹⁰⁰
- 6) שואה (“devastation”). The psalmist pleads for deliverance from the lion’s ravages (Ps 35:17; cf. *Ps 35:8 [see 3.J.6 above]). Perhaps the term should be considered under Domain 3, but other passages clarify that it is sometimes used of some sort of noise or sound, especially that of a storm (Job 30:14, Prov 1:27, 3:25; Ezek 38:9; Zeph 1:15).
- 7) קרא (“to cry out”). Isa 21:8 uses קרא with אריה, but the latter term here is titular or metaphorical, and is often emended.¹⁰¹
- 8) קול (“voice, sound”). Normally when used of the lion, קול is combined with נתן (see 5.B.1 below). But it is also found by itself in Job 4:10 and in *Ezek 19:7, 9 (see 5.A.1 and 3.J.4, respectively, above).

B. Compound Terms.

- 1) קול + נתן (“to raise/utter a sound/the voice”). This combination is frequently applied to the lion, especially as the B element in parallel with another “roaring” term (e.g., Jer 2:15, 12:8; Amos 3:4). It is also used in more mundane contexts (e.g., 2 Chr 24:9) and used of other subjects—human (Jer 22:20, 48:3), animal (Ps 104:12), and otherwise (Prov 1:20, 2:3, 8:1; Joel 2:11). It is also often found with reference to Yahweh and Yahweh’s thunder(ing) (Exod 9:23; 1 Sam 12:17; 1 Sam 22:14//Ps 18:14).¹⁰² Several of these passages allude to the lion, and do so by combining קול + נתן with another lion-vocalization term: *Jer 25:30; *Joel 4:16; *Amos 1:2 (see 5.A.1 above).
- 2) פה + פצה (“to open the mouth”). For the syntagma with reference to the lion see Ps 22:14. This combination might be considered under Domain 4 as it is often used of opening the mouth in order to swallow (Gen 4:11; Num 16:30; Deut 11:6) or to eat (Ezek 2:8). However, it is also used of human speech (Judg 11:35, 36; Job 35:16; Lam 2:16, 3:46) and animal noise (Isa 10:14), so it can be considered here. Even so, the context of Ps 22:14 connects this

¹⁰⁰ Akkadian and Syriac cognates as well as the structure of the lines argues against any emendation. See Appendix 3.

¹⁰¹ See Appendix 3.

¹⁰² Cf. also Ps 46:7, where God’s קול + נתן is parallel to הים גוים.

particular instance not only to roaring (שָׁאָה), but also to ripping (טָרַף), and so פָּה + פָּצָה might also be considered under Domain 3.

DOMAIN 6: HABITAT

This domain includes a verb used to refer to the lion's dwelling-style, then proceeds to list generic terms referring to the lion's dwelling-place. Included in the latter are designations that are unclear as to their nature as enclosed or open spaces, each of which is consequently treated separately (6.C and 6.D, respectively).

A. *Living.*

- 1) שָׁכַן ("to live"). Dan lives like a lion (Deut 33:20).

B. *Generic and/or Unclear Terms.*

- 1) מְקוֹם ("place"). Jer 4:7 employs מְקוֹם in conjunction with סִבְךָ (see 6.B.7 below) to designate the lion's place.
- 2) אֹרֶב ("lair"). *Job 38:40 (see 2.C.2 above) depicts lions sitting in the covert of their lair.¹⁰³
- 3) מַעֲוֵן ("den"). מַעֲוֵן is the term for the lion's den in Nah 2:12, though it is also used to refer to the lair of jackals (Jer 9:10, 10:22, 49:33, 51:37). מַעֲוֵן also commonly describes Yahweh's habitation (Deut 26:15; 2 Chr 30:27, 36:15; Pss 26:8, 68:6, Zech 2:17, etc.). These references take on further significance in the light of *Jer 25:30 (see 5.A.1 above).
- 4) מַעֲנָה ("den"). Employed in Amos 3:4; Nah 2:13; and Song 4:8. Additional references to the lion are found in *Job 38:40 (see 2.C.2 above) and *Ps 104:22 (see 2.A.1 above).¹⁰⁴ Additionally, two more passages utilize this term, both with reference to Jerusalem and both perhaps evoking lion imagery—but with quite different effect.
 *Jer 21:13: "Behold, I am against you, O inhabitant(s) of the valley, O rock(s) of the plain—declares Yahweh—the ones saying 'Who will come down against us? Who will enter into our lairs?'"
 *Ps 76:3: "His abode was in Salem, his dwelling-place was in Zion."
- 5) מִסְתָּר ("hiding place"). This term is found with the lion in Pss 10:9, 17:12; and Lam 3:10. It refers to the place where the lion lies in wait and is thus related to hunting habits. Additionally, מִסְתָּר is

¹⁰³ The heaping up of terms here may indicate that one of the nouns should be taken in some sort of adverbial sense (cf. John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 504-5). But note the use of אֹרֶב for designating the dens of other animals in Job 37:8.

¹⁰⁴ The term is also used of other animals' dens in Job 37:8.

found in in Ps 10:8, prior to the lion passage in 10:9, referring to the wicked.¹⁰⁵

*Ps 10:8: “He sits in ambush in the courts and in hiding places he slays the innocent. His eyes watch¹⁰⁶ for the helpless.”

- 6) סכה/סך (“covert”). The lion’s covert is mentioned in Jer 25:38; Ps 10:9; and *Job 38:40 (see 2.C.2 above). *Ps 76:3 (see 6.B.4 above) uses סך with reference to Yahweh’s abode in Salem.¹⁰⁷
- 7) סבך (“thicket”). The lion of Jer 4:7 departs from its thicket. It is clear from other passages that the סבך is where the forest (Isa 9:17, 10:34) or wooded land is to be found (Gen 22:13).

C. Enclosed Areas.

- 1) בור/באר (“pit”). Benaiah kills a lion that is in the midst of a pit (2 Sam 23:20//1 Chr 11:22). In light of 3.J above (especially 3.J.8), perhaps this pit was part of a trap laid for the lion.
- 2) גב (“den”). גב is the term used in Daniel 6 (Dan 6:8, 13, 17, 20, 21, 25 [twice]), where it always refers to the den of lions.¹⁰⁸ As noted elsewhere in this work, Karel van der Toorn has argued that this is an unrealistic presentation and that the author of Daniel 6 has actually “literalized” what was originally a metaphor in Assyrian and Babylonian courts (and letters).¹⁰⁹
- 3) חר (“cave”). Utilized in Nah 2:13.
- 4) עיר (“city”). Jer 5:6 mentions the lion in the context of a city, though the closest referent is clearly the leopard.
- 5) בין הרחבות/בתוך רחבות (“in the midst of the streets/between the streets”). These similar formulations describe where the lion is found (according to the sluggard) in Prov 22:13 and 26:13, respectively.
- 6) חוץ (“outside”). As חוץ appears in parallel with רחבות בתוך at Prov 22:13 (see previous), it is clear that it represents an enclosed area—that is, an inhabited city or village—not the lion’s normal (open) environment.
- 7) דרך (“road”). Similarly, the דרך of Prov 26:13 is likely referring to a road in a town. The road of 1 Kgs 13:24, 28 seems to be rural as it is outside the town of Bethel (1 Kgs 13:25; cf. 13:11). Still, it was apparently well-traveled (1 Kgs 13:25).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Ps 64:5 and note the assertion that Yahweh has control over or can see into the secret places (Isa 45:3; Jer 23:24).

¹⁰⁶ With LXX, Syr; so also NRSV, NJPSV (Tanakh).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. also Ps 27:5 and Lam 2:6 (שך), which also mention Yahweh’s “covert.”

¹⁰⁸ See also Dan 6:18, 24—without the qualifier “of lions.” For the different Aramaic constructions, see W. Randall Garr, “On the Alternation between Construct and *D/* Phrases in Biblical Aramaic,” *JSS* 35 (1990): 213–31.

¹⁰⁹ See Karel van der Toorn, “In the Lions’ Den: The Babylonian Background of a Biblical Motif,” *CBQ* 60 (1998): 626–40; and idem, *In de leeuwenkuil: Oratie uitgesproken op 13 maart 1998 in de Aula van de Universiteit van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers AUP, 1998). See further the discussions in Chapter 2 (§2.2.4.1) and 4 (§4.2.4).

D. Open Areas.

- 1) גִּאֲוִן (“pride”). The lion described in Jer 49:19, 50:44 goes up from the pride of the Jordan to the perennial pasture. The lions mourn (שָׂאָה) the destruction of the pride of the Jordan in Zech 11:3. Such passages indicate that “the pride of the Jordan” was a place “in which the lions made their covert...and therefore dangerous.”¹¹⁰ This helps to explain the NRSV’s translation of the term as “thicket(s)” and, more importantly, casts significant light on Jer 12:5.
 *Jer 12:5: “If you have run with sprinters and they have wearied you, then how will you compete with horses? And (if) in a safe land you fall down,¹¹¹ how will you do in the pride of the Jordan?”
- 2) נוֹה (“pasture”).¹¹² Employed in Jer 49:19, 50:44—in both cases modified by אֵיתָן. Two additional passages also mention the pasture in connection with lion imagery: *Amos 1:2 (see 5.A.1 above) and *Jer 25:30 (see 5.A.1 above).
- 3) יַעַר (“forest”). The forest is the locale mentioned with the lion in Jer 5:6, 12:8; Amos 3:4.
- 4) כֶּרֶם (“vineyard”). Samson encounters the lion he kills effortlessly in the vineyards of Timnah (Judg 14:5).
- 5) בָּשָׁן (“Bashan”). Dan is described as a lion that leaps forth from Bashan (Deut 33:22), though some have emended this text so that it no longer refers to the region of Bashan but to a serpent.¹¹³
- 6) הָר (“mountain”). Song 4:8 mentions various mountains (the Lebanon, the peak of Amana, the peak of Senir and Hermon), calling them the dens of lions. Though an exceedingly common term, this connection is also found in other lion passages (Isa 31:4, 65:25), including those where the lion is not explicitly named: *Ezek 19:9 (see 3.J.4 above); *Amos 1:2 (of Mt. Zion; see 5.A.1 above); *Ps 76:5 (see 3.G.1.b.iv above).
- 7) גִּבְעָה (“hill”). The lion that is Yahweh in Isa 31:4 comes to wage war against the hill of Mt. Zion.
- 8) מִרְעָה (“pasture”). Nah 2:12. The passage is frequently emended to מְעֵרָה “cave.” On the one hand, zoologically-speaking, lions do not live in caves, and thus “pasture” suits the context well (see 6.D.2

¹¹⁰ BDB 145; followed by Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 283. See further Menashe Har-El, “The Pride of the Jordan: The Jungle of the Jordan,” *BA* 41 (1978): 65-75.

¹¹¹ Reading גִּבְעָה as a root homonymous to בָּטַח, “to trust.” See Douglas Rawlinson Jones, *Jeremiah* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 191; further, Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 283; and McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:263-64. Holladay, *Jeremiah I*, 379-80 stays with “trust.”

¹¹² Note also 6.D.8 below.

¹¹³ Cf. Ugar *ḥḥ*, see Appendix 3.

above). On the other hand, however, and on the side of emendation is the use of **הר** in Nah 2:13 (see 6.C.3 above).¹¹⁴

DOMAIN 7: PREDICATES

This and the remaining domains are included for the sake of completeness. They have not been used to produce additional passages evoking instances of non-explicit lion imagery. Rather, when combined with the other domains, they help to provide a comprehensive taxonomy of the lion image in the Hebrew Bible. The predicates in Domain 7 are organized according to positive and negative formulations.

A. Positive Formulations. Included here are adjectival predicates as well as participial ones. Note that it is uncertain if 7.A.5 should be applied to the lion.

- 1) **עז** (“strong”). Twice **עז** is used of the lion (Judg *14:14 [see 4.B.1 above], 18).
- 2) **גבור** (“mighty”). Prov 30:30 describes the lion as mighty and Saul and Jonathan are said to be mightier than lions (2 Sam 1:23).
- 3) **נאה** (“bold”). Job 10:16 uses **נאה** to describe how God hunts Job like a lion.¹¹⁵
- 4) **משחית** (“destroyer”). Employed in Jer 2:30, 4:7 where it describes the destruction of nations or a group of people.
- 5) **בני שחץ** (“proud animals”). Given the parallelism of Job 28:8, many have interpreted **בני שחץ** as another term for lion.¹¹⁶ This is uncertain, however, and has not been treated as such in Appendix 1. Even so, note **נאה** with reference to the lion (see 7.A.3 above).

B. Negative Formulations.

- 1) **לא יחת** (“not frightened”). The lion of Isa 31:4 is not frightened even at a pack of shepherds and their noise.
- 2) **לא יענה** (“not terrified”). Neither is the lion of Isa 31:4 terrified by these shepherds and their din.
- 3) **אין מחריר** (“not disturbed”). Nah 2:12 describes the den and cave of lions where they walked undisturbed. The negative, threatening overtones of this situation are made explicit in Deut 28:26 and Jer 7:33. Conversely, texts like Lev 26:6 and Ezek 34:28 promise a time when there will be no dangerous animals to disturb the inhabitants of the land.¹¹⁷ On this point it is interesting to note that

¹¹⁴ Note that both **מעררה** and **מרעה** are found in Isa 32:14, a passage describing how a city will be deserted and destroyed.

¹¹⁵ See Appendix 3 for the slight emendation.

¹¹⁶ This is as early as the Mishnah. See Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (2 vols.; New York: Judaica, 1992), 2:1550 and TWOT, 1:453.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Isa 17:2.

the roar of the lion in Hos 11:11 brings the people back trembling (יחרדו) like birds.

- 4) לא ישוב מפני-כל (“not turning back before anything”). Prov 30:30 makes this predication of the lion who is mighty among the animals.¹¹⁸

DOMAIN 8: YOUNG AND THE REARING OF YOUNG

Note the introductory comment under Domain 7 above.

A. *Young.*

- 1) גור (“cub”). See Appendix 1.
- 2) בן (“cub”). The preferred term with לביא; see Appendix 1.
- 3) כפיר (“young lion”). See Appendix 1.

B. *Development.*

- 1) למד (“to learn”). למד is utilized in Ezek 19:3, 6 of the young lion’s development in learning how to hunt prey.

C. *Raising Young.* Most of the terms discussed below are from the elaborate lion metaphor in Ezekiel 19. Given the metaphorical nature of the text, it cannot be certain that the same terms would have been applied to lions in the wild, though it does not seem unreasonable to assume so.

- 1) רבה (“to raise” D). Ezek 19:2 employs רבה to describe the lioness’ rearing of her cubs.
- 2) עלה (“to raise up” H). Similarly, Ezek 19:3 uses עלה in the H to describe how the lioness raised up one of her cubs.
- 3) לקח (“to take”). לקח is used in Ezek 19:5 to indicate how the lioness selected another one of her cubs after the first was captured.
- 4) שים (“to make [into]”). The lioness makes (שמתהו) this second cub (גור) into a כפיר (Ezek 19:5).
- 5) חלץ נשד (“to offer the breast”). Lam 4:3 uses this combination in its description of how תנין suckles its cubs. Note, however, that this verse may have nothing to do with lions. See the discussion in Appendices 1 and 3.
- 6) ינק (“to nurse” H). The same situation (see previous) obtains for the nursing described in Lam 4:3.
- 7) ראה (“to see”). The lioness of Ezekiel 19 watches her son (Ezek 19:5).
- 8) יחל (“to wait”). The lioness of Ezekiel 19 waits to see what will happen to her son (Ezek 19:5), though the term used here, נוחלה, is often emended (see Appendix 3).
- 9) תקוה (“hope”). Ezek 19:5 refers to the lioness’ hope (תקותה), which may somehow refer to the rearing process but might just as well

¹¹⁸ Cf. Job 39:22 which states that the (war?) horse does not turn back from the sword.

apply to the main referent of the metaphor and have nothing to do with leonine habits.

DOMAIN 9: ANIMALS MENTIONED WITH THE LION

The lion occurs with several other animals in the Hebrew Bible, sometimes in poetic parallelism (e.g., bear: Lam 3:10, Prov 28:15; leopard: Song 4:8; wolves: Zeph 3:3; eagle: 1 Sam 1:23). The listing here is not exhaustive, merely representative.¹¹⁹

A. Specific Animals.

- 1) דב ("bear"). 1 Sam 17:34, 36, 37; Isa 11:7; Hos 13:8; Amos 5:19; Prov 28:15; Lam 3:10. Oftentimes the bear is שכול—bereaved or robbed of young.
- 2) זאב ("wolf"). Isa 11:6, 65:25; Jer 5:6; Zeph 3:3.
- 3) נמר ("leopard"). Isa 11:6; Jer 5:6; Hos 13:7; Song 4:8.
- 4) תנין/תנין ("jackals"?). Lam 4:3.¹²⁰ Cf. 9.C.1 below.
- 5) נשר ("eagle"). 2 Sam 1:23; Ezek 10:14.¹²¹
- 6) צבי ("gazelle"). 1 Chr 12:8.
- 7) גדי ("kid"). Isa 11:6.¹²²
- 8) כלב ("dog"). Eccl 9:4.
- 9) דבורה ("bee"). Judg 14:8.
- 10) גמל ("camel"). Isa 30:6.
- 11) יען ("ostrich"). Lam 4:3.¹²³
- 12) *Snakes and Serpents*:
 - a. נחש ("serpent"). Isa 65:25; Amos 5:19.
 - b. אפעה ("viper"). Isa 30:6.
 - c. תנין ("serpent"). Ps 91:13.
 - d. פתן ("snake"). Ps 91:13.¹²⁴
- 13) *Sheep*:
 - a. <איל> ("ram"). Jer 49:19; 50:44.¹²⁵
 - b. <עול> ("suckling"). Jer 49:19; 50:44.¹²⁶
 - c. שא ("sheep"). 1 Sam 17:34; Jer 50:17.

¹¹⁹ In this case, the domain is restricted only to those verses that *explicitly* include one of the lion terms. The listing is thus far from complete. For instance, note the entire context of Job 38-39, which mentions the lion (38:39) along with a number of other animals, including the raven, the mountain goat, the wild ass, the wild ox, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk, and the eagle. Note also the introductory comment under Domain 7 above.

¹²⁰ For the problematics of this verse, see Appendices 1 and 3.

¹²¹ For other birds, cf. also Isa 31:7; Hos 11:11; Job 38:41; Prov 30:31.

¹²² Cf. also Judg 14:6.

¹²³ But note the reservations regarding Lam 4:3 expressed above and in Appendices 1 and 3.

¹²⁴ See also the discussion of Deut 33:22 in Appendix 3 (Ugar *bḥn* is the dialectical equivalent of Heb פתן).

¹²⁵ See Appendix 3 for the emendation.

¹²⁶ See Appendix 3 for the emendation. As the context discusses rams (see previous), the sucklings would be sheep (cf. Ps 78:71).

- d. טלה ("lamb"). Isa 65:25.
 - e. כבש ("lamb"). Isa 11:6; 2 Chr 9:18.¹²⁷
 - f. צאן ("sheep"). 1 Sam 17:34; Micah 5:7.
 - g. עדר ("flock [of sheep]"). 1 Sam 17:34; Micah 5:7.
- 14) *Donkeys*:
- a. חמור ("donkey"). 1 Kgs 13:24, 28.
 - b. עיר ("donkey"). Isa 30:6.
- 15) *Oxen/Cattle*:
- a. עגל ("calf"). 1 Kgs 10:19; Isa 11:6.
 - b. שור ("bull"). Ezek 1:10.
 - c. פרה ("cow"). Isa 11:7.
 - d. ראם ("wild ox"). Ps 22:22; *Num 24:8 (see 4.A.2 above).
 - e. בקר ("ox"). 1 Kgs 7:29 (twice); Isa 11:7, 65:25.

B. General/Unclear Appelatives.

- 1) בהמה ("beasts, animals"). Isa 30:6; Micah 5:7 (בהמות יער); Prov 30:30.
- 2) חית שדה ("beast of the field"). Hos 13:8.
- 3) פריץ חיות ("ravenous beast"). Isa 35:9.
- 4) בני שחן ("proud animals"). Job 28:8. See 7.A.5 above.

C. Fantastic Creatures.¹²⁸

- 1) תנינ/תנין ("sea dragon"). Ezek 32:2. Cf. 9.A.4 above.
- 2) כרוב ("Cherub"). 1 Kgs 7:29, 36.
- 3) שרף ("Seraph"). Isa 30:6.

DOMAIN 10: MISCELLANEOUS TERMINOLOGY

The remaining items do not fit easily in the nine domains outlined above and are thus listed here in brief fashion and in no particular order. As with Domains 7-9, Domain 10 is restricted primarily to passages that explicitly contain one of the lion terms and is therefore obviously not exhaustive, as it does not include additional passages evoking instances of non-explicit lion imagery.

A. Humans Mentioned with the Lion.

- 1) אדם ("human"). Ezek 10:14, 19:3, 6, 41:19.
- 2) רעה ("shepherd"). 1 Sam 17:34; Isa 31:4 (מלא רעים); Jer 49:19, 50:44.
- 3) מלך ("king"). Prov 19:12, 20:2.¹²⁹
- 4) מושל ("ruler"). Prov 28:15.
- 5) נשיא ("prince"). Ezek 22:25.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ For the emendation in 2 Chr 9:18 (<כבש>) see Appendix 3.

¹²⁸ Note also the use of lion imagery in the description of the creatures in Ezekiel 1, 10, and Daniel 7.

¹²⁹ Cf. Prov 30:31.

¹³⁰ See Appendix 3 for the emendation.

- 6) שר (“prince”). Zeph 3:3.

B. Items Mentioned with the Lion.

- 1) חרב (“sword”). Jer 2:30, 25:38.¹³¹
- 2) אפון חרון (“his fierce anger”). Jer 25:38.
- 3) דבש (“honey”). Judg 14:8, 18.

C. Miscellaneous Verbs

- 1) יער (“summon” H). Jer 49:19, 50:44.
- 2) לפני + עמד (“to stand before”). Jer 49:19, 50:44.
- 3) מן + נוס (“to flee from”). Amos 5:19.
- 4) דמה (“to be like” N). Ezek 32:2.
- 5) שלח (“to send”). God sends lions on the vicinity of Samaria in 2 Kgs 17:25, 26.
- 6) היה (“to be”). Ezek 19:3, 6; Micah 5:7.

D. Terms for (Metaphorical) Destruction. In addition to the various terms used to describe the lion’s hunting and killing (and the hunting or killing of the lion), the book of Jeremiah contains three syntagmas to describe destructions associated with lion imagery.

- 1) שית + ארץ + שמה (“to make the land desolate”). Jer 2:15.
- 2) שים + ארץ + שמה (“to make the land desolate”). Jer 4:7. Cf. 10.E.5 below.
- 3) היה + ארץ + שמה (“the land becomes desolate”). Jer 25:38.

Another term is found in Ezekiel 19:

- 4) חרב (“to lay waste” H). *Ezek 19:7 (see 5.A.1 above).

An additional combination is found in Lamentations 3:

- 5) שים + שום (“to leave devastated”). *Lam 3:11 (see 3.G.3 above). Cf. 10.E.2 above.

¹³¹ For the emendation in Jer 25:38, see Appendix 3.

Appendix 3:

Passages in the Hebrew Bible that Mention the Lion

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

- 1) This Appendix includes only those passages that contain one of the Hebrew terms for lion(s), not including GNs and PNs. For etymological data relating to the lion words and for the PNs and GNs associated with them, see Appendix 1. For the semantic domain(s) of lion imagery in the Hebrew Bible see Appendix 2.
- 2) Parenthetical numbers following the reference indicate how many instances of a particular lion term(s) occur in that verse.
- 3) Aramaic passages are so indicated parenthetically following the reference (but before the number of instances of a lion term[s]).
- 4) The list is organized according to the order of the Hebrew Bible. In this way, information regarding the frequency of lion terms (or lack thereof) in particular books, units, or sections can be quickly ascertained. Note, for example, the low frequency of lion imagery in the Pentateuch outside of the archaic poetry.
- 5) Various nuances within books, units, or sections can also be gathered from this database. For instance, note the change in terminology for the lion in Judges 14.
- 6) It must be admitted that this Appendix, like Appendix 2, is somewhat limited in use because the isolated verses included here provide no sense of the broader literary context. Note, for instance, the extended use of lion imagery in Ezekiel 19. A lion term does not occur in 19:4, though the lion of 19:3 is grammatically present here as well. So, similarly, 1 Sam 17:35. Such texts as these latter are included, for the most part, in Appendix 2 (see further there). Even so, Appendix 3 is necessary and useful as a quick and easy reference to the vast majority of the texts treated in the body of the study.
- 7) As with Appendix 2, the translations included here are intended to be functional and provisional, not final or definitive.
- 8) Finally, pursuant to Appendix 1, the temptation to choose stylistically-different translations for each of the different lion terms has been avoided for the reasons expressed there. The only variance from this practice is found with the terms **לֵוִי** and **כַּפִּיר** as these terms can be defined with a greater degree of confidence.

PASSAGES

Gen 49:9 (4x):¹ “Judah is a lion’s cub [גֹּר אַרְיָה]. You have gone up from the prey my son. He crouched down, he laid down² like a lion [כְּאַרְיָה],³ even like a lion [וְכַלְבִּיָּא]. Who would rouse him?”

Num 23:24 (2x): “Look: a people rising up like a lion [כְּלָבִיָּא], rousing itself like a lion [וְכַאֲרִי]. It will not lie down until it has eaten prey and drunk the blood of the slain.”

Num 24:9 (2x):⁴ “He crouched down, he laid down⁵ like a lion [כְּאַרִי],⁶ even like a lion [וְכַלְבִּיָּא]. Who would rouse him? Blessed be those who bless you; cursed be those who curse you.”

Deut 33:20: “And to Gad he said: Blessed be <the broad lands>⁷ of Gad. He lives like a lion [כְּלָבִיָּא]. He rips the arm—even the head!”

Deut 33:22 (2x): “And to Dan he said: Dan is a lion’s cub [גֹּר אַרְיָה]; he leaps forth⁸ from Bashan.”

Judg 14:5 (2x): “Then Samson <>⁹ went down to Timnah. And as <he>¹⁰ came to the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion from (the) lion pride [כְּפִיר אַרְיֹת] (came) roaring to meet him.”

¹ For Gen 49:9b, cf. Num 24:9a below.

² MT: רָבַץ; contrast Num 24:9: שָׁכַב.

³ Contrast Num 24:9: כְּאַרִי.

⁴ For Num 24:9a, cf. Gen 49:9b above.

⁵ MT: שָׁכַב; contrast Gen 49:9: רָבַץ.

⁶ Contrast Gen 49:9: כְּאַרְיָה.

⁷ Reading גִּרְחִי for MT’s מִרְחִיב (metathesis) with Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (repr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 79 n. 66. So also Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 400 and n. 34.

⁸ Following LXX: ἐκπαύσεται (so also NRSV, NJPSV [Tanakh]). MT’s יִזְנֶק (a *hapax*) is difficult. Cross and Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 69 suggest (and emend to) “Who shies away from a viper” in the light of Ugar *ḥṣ* (see *ibid.*, 80 n. 74; so also HALOT 1:276; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 401 and n. 41).

⁹ Omitting וְאָבִי וְאָמִי in the light of the following context, where Samson’s parents have no knowledge of his exploits (Judg 14:6). See George Foot Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1895), 327, 330, 333; J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 239–40; and John Gray, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 328, the latter of whom thinks the narrative represents a “telescoping of the tradition of the slaying of the lion and that of the betrothal of Samson at which his parents would be present, the two traditions being independent.” Note also the singular verb וִירַד, though a singular verb with one (main) subject followed by an additional (secondary) subject(s) (with ו) is not uncommon in Hebrew prose. See, e.g., Christo H. J. Van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 249–51, especially 250. See also the next note.

Judg 14:8 (2x): “And he returned after some time to take her and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion [הַאֲרִיָּה]. And there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion [הַאֲרִיָּה], and honey too.”

Judg 14:9: “So he scraped it into his hands and he went, eating as he walked. He came to his father and to his mother and he gave some to them and they ate; but he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the body of the lion [הַאֲרִיָּה].”

Judg 14:18: “On the seventh day, before the sun set,¹² the men of the city said to him: ‘What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion [נֶאֱרִי]?’ Then he said to them: ‘If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have figured out my riddle.’”

1 Sam 17:34: “David said to Saul: ‘Your servant was his father’s shepherd. And when the lion [הַאֲרִי] or the bear¹³ came and took a sheep from the flock...”

1 Sam 17:36: “Your servant has killed both the lion [הַאֲרִי] and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the ranks of the living God.”

1 Sam 17:37: “And David said: ‘Yahweh, who delivered me from the paw of the lion [הַאֲרִי] and from the paw of the bear, it is he who will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’ Then Saul said to David: ‘Go! And may Yahweh be with you.’”

2 Sam 1:23: “Saul and Jonathan: beloved and lovely! In their life and death they were not divided. They were faster than eagles, they were mightier than lions [נֶאֱרִיָּוִת].”

¹⁰ So LXX^{BC}: καὶ ἡλθεν; MT: וַיָּבֹאוּ. The plural in the MT might be the result of a need to match the introduction of “and his father and mother” earlier in the verse (see Moore, *Judges*, 330, 333). Note also that the suffix on לִקְרָאתוֹ is singular, though Samson could be understood as the primary, governing subject (so also with יָרַד). Moore, *Judges*, 333 explains LXX^{ALM} (καὶ ἐχέλιεν εἰς ἀμπελώμα) as “perhaps an early attempt to explain how his parents, who...accompanied him to Timnath, knew nothing of his exploits.” See also the previous note.

¹¹ See the discussion in Appendix 1 (§17 under אַרְיָה/אַרִי).

¹² Many commentators emend הַחֲרִסָּה to הַחֲרִירָה, “bride-chamber” (so Moore, *Judges*, 337-38, 339; Gray *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, 331; originally B. Stade), in the light of Judg 15:1 and the low frequency of חָרַס. Either reading is intelligible (*contra* Moore, *Judges*, 338) as the Philistines were given seven days and the day was reckoned (at least in Israel) as ending at sundown (cf. Soggin, *Judges*, 242). Perhaps also חָרַס was used to avoid a word play on Samson’s name (שִׁמְשׁוֹן/שִׁמְשׁוֹן), though this may be less likely. The MT is supported by LXX and Vulg.

¹³ See the discussion in Chapter 5 (§5.3.1).

- 2 Sam 17:10: “And even the valiant whose heart is like the heart of the lion [הַאֲרִיָּה] will surely melt for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty warrior and that those with him are valiant.”
- 2 Sam 23:20:¹⁴ “And Benaiah,¹⁵ son of Jehoiada, from Kabzeel,¹⁶ was a man¹⁷ of <valor,>¹⁸ great in deeds. He struck the two Ariel¹⁹ of Moab and he went down and killed the lion [Kethib: הַאֲרִיָּה; Qere: הַאֲרִי]²⁰ in the midst of the pit²¹ on a snowy day.”
- 1 Kgs 7:29 (2x): “And upon the borders which were between the frames were lions [אֲרִיֹּת], oxen, and cherubim. And upon the frames above and below the lions [לְאֲרִיֹּת] and oxen were wreaths of beveled work.”
- 1 Kgs 7:36: “And upon the surfaces of its supports and on its borders he [Hiram] carved cherubim, lions [אֲרִיֹּת], and palm trees, where each had space, surrounded by wreaths.”
- 1 Kgs 10:19:²² “The throne had six²³ steps. And the throne had a <calf’s>²⁴ head²⁵ at its back;²⁶ and on each side were arm rests and two lions [אֲרִיֹּת] were standing beside the arm rests.”

¹⁴ Cf. 1 Chr 11:22 below.

¹⁵ MT: וּבְנֵיהוּ; contrast 1 Chr 11:22: בְּנֵיהוּ.

¹⁶ MT: מִן־קִבְצָאֵל; cf. 1 Chr 11:22: אֶל־קִבְצָאֵל.

¹⁷ MT has בֶּן in addition to אִישׁ. This may be a conflation of variant readings. See Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 247; and Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1964), 403 n. f.

¹⁸ Reading חֵיל with the Qere, several MSS, Syr, and Vulg, as well as the parallel in 1 Chr 11:22.

¹⁹ MT: אֲרִאֵל; cf. 1 Chr 11:22: אֲרִיאֵל. For 2 Samuel, note LXX: σῖσος Ἀριηγ (cf. OL gloss); Syr: gnbryn; Targ: רַבְרַבִּי; Vulg: leones. Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*, 403 n. g suggests לְמֵאב אֲרִיִּים for MT’s מֵאב אֲרִאֵל, though he offers no convincing explanation for the present state of MT.

²⁰ Some MSS read the Qere, cf. the same Kethib/Qere issue in Lam 3:10. But note the parallel in 1 Chr 11:22: הַאֲרִי. The Qere at 2 Sam 23:20, then, could be a case of later harmonization. See further the discussion of the Kethib/Qere issue in Chapter 2 (§2.1.2).

²¹ MT: הַבְּאֵר; cf. 1 Chr 11:22: הַבּוֹר.

²² Cf. 2 Chr 9:18 below.

²³ MT: שֵׁשׁ; contrast 2 Chr 9:18: וְשֵׁשׁ.

²⁴ Repointing MT’s וְרֹאשׁ־עֵגֶל to וְרֹאשׁ־עֵגֶל. The former is “unanimously regarded as a scribal correction for ‘calf’s head’” (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 640; see also James A. Montgomery and Henry Snyder Gehman, *The Books of Kings* [ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960], 230). The LXX apparently read (or translated) a plural (or collective singular): προτομαῖ μὲν γὰρ, but the singular is preferable (Montgomery and Gehman, *Kings*, 221, 230; cf. Josephus, *Ant.*, 8.5.2 [140]). Contrast MT here with 2 Chr 9:18: וְכִבְשׁ בְּוֶהֱב (see the notes at that text). John Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary* (2d ed.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) thinks the Chronicles text is secondary (263 n. g, 266); so also Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 640-41.

- 1 Kgs 10:20:²⁷ “Twelve lions [אַרְיִים]²⁸ were standing < >²⁹ on each side of the six steps. The like has not been made in any kingdom.”³⁰
- 1 Kgs 13:24 (2x): “So he left; and a lion [אַרְיֵה] found him on the road and killed him. His body was thrown down onto the road and the donkey was standing beside it while the lion [וְהָאֲרִיָּה] was standing beside the body.”
- 1 Kgs 13:25: “And as people passed by, they saw the body thrown down onto the road and the lion [הָאֲרִיָּה] standing beside the body. Then they went and spoke (of it) in the town where the old prophet lived.”
- 1 Kgs 13:26: “When the prophet who brought him back from the road heard (of it), he said: ‘It is the man of God who disobeyed the command of Yahweh; Yahweh has given him over to the lion [לְאֲרִיָּה] and it has torn him and killed him according to the word of Yahweh that he spoke to him.’”
- 1 Kgs 13:28 (2x): “Then he went and found his body thrown down onto the road and <the>³¹ donkey and the lion [וְהָאֲרִיָּה] standing beside the body, (but) the lion [הָאֲרִיָּה] had not eaten the body nor attacked the donkey!”
- 1 Kgs 20:36 (2x): “And he said to him: ‘Because you did not listen to the voice of Yahweh, as soon as you leave me, the lion [הָאֲרִיָּה] will kill you.’ And when he left his side, the lion [הָאֲרִיָּה] found him and killed him.”
- 2 Kgs 17:25: “And when they first began to live there, they did not fear Yahweh. So Yahweh sent the lions [הָאֲרִיֹּת] on them, and they were killers among them.”
- 2 Kgs 17:26: “So they spoke to the Assyrian king, saying: ‘The people whom you exiled and settled in the cities of Samaria do not know the judgment(s) of the god of the land and he has sent the lions [הָאֲרִיֹּת] on them, and they

²⁵ Contrast 2 Chr 9:18: וַיִּכְבֹּשׁ בְּזֶהָב, but see the previous note and the notes to 2 Chr 9:18 below.

²⁶ MT: מֵאֲחֶרֶי; contrast 2 Chr 9:18: מֵאֲחֶרֶי.

²⁷ Cf. 2 Chr 9:19 below.

²⁸ Contrast 2 Chr 9:19: אֲרִיֹּת. Montgomery and Gehman, *Kings*, 230 argued that 1 Kgs 10:20 “may be a double r[ea]d[in]g...with intent of giving a different form for the artificial ‘lion’.” They compared GKC §87o (p. 243) on the use of וֹת- for יִם- (dual or plural) for inanimate objects (e.g., יָדִים, “hands”; יָרֹת, “artificial hands” or “arms [of a throne]”). The opposite, of course, is present in 1 Kgs 10:20.

²⁹ Deleting MT’s שָׁם, which is missing in LXX, Syr, and Vulg, though it is present in 2 Chr 9:19. Its presence there, however, is probably the reason for its presence here: namely, a late harmonization.

³⁰ MT: מִמְלֶכֶת; contrast 2 Chr 9:19: מִמְלֶכֶה. The singular is probably to be read (so Gray, *I & II Kings*, 263 n. i; Montgomery and Gehman, *Kings*, 230) or understood. Cf. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §7.2.2a-b (pp. 114-15); GKC §146c (pp. 467-68).

³¹ Reading וְהָאֲרִיָּה with several MSS, Syr, and Targ. MT is probably the result of haplography of the similar הָ and הָ.

are killing them because there are none among them who know the judgment(s) of the god of the land.”

Isa 5:29 (2x): “His roar is like (that of) a lion [כלביא]; he roars³² like the young lions [ככפירים]. He growls and seizes the prey, he carries it off and there is no deliverer.”

Isa 11:6: “The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, the calf and the young lion [וכפיר] <will grow fat>³³ together, and a little child will lead them.”

Isa 11:7:³⁴ “The cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together; and the lion [ואריה] will eat straw like the ox.”

Isa 15:9: “For the waters of <Dibon>³⁵ are full of blood. For I will put on <Dibon>³⁶ more—a lion [אריה]³⁷ for the one who escapes Moab, and for the remnant, <terror>.”³⁸

Isa 21:8: “The lion [אריה]³⁹ called out: ‘Continually by day, O Lord, I stand upon a watchtower, and at my post I stand throughout the night.’”

Isa 30:6 (2x): “An oracle concerning the animals of the Negeb: Through a land of trouble and distress, of lion [לביא] and <roaring>⁴⁰ lion [ליש], of viper and flying serpent, they carry their riches upon the shoulder(s) of donkeys

³² Reading ישאנ with Qere.

³³ Reading ימרא for MT’s ומריא, largely due to the parallelism, as well as the Versional evidence. See Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 460, 462 and cf. Ugar mra (e.g., KTU 1.4 VII 50; G. Del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas de Canaan: Segun la Tradicion de Ugarit* [Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1981], 583: “engordar”).

³⁴ Cf. Isa 65:25 below on the lion phrase.

³⁵ Reading Dibon (see Isa 15:2) with 1QIsa^a and Vulg for MT’s דימון. The latter could be a word play with דם, “blood,” later in the verse (see John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986], 339).

³⁶ See previous note.

³⁷ Some emend אריה (e.g., NJPSV [Tanakh]); see D. Winton Thomas in *BHS*; R. E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 153: “obscure,” “almost certainly corrupt.” This is, however, unnecessary (cf. Michael Matthew Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible: A Study of a Biblical Metaphor” [Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981], 39).

³⁸ Emending MT’s ארמה to אימה with Wildberger and others. Other solutions have been offered (see John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* [WBC 24; Waco: Word, 1985], 227 n. 9b) but this one involves little change to the consonantal text.

³⁹ 1QIsa^a reads: הרהא; cf. Syr. Most commentators follow suit (cf. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 179: “obviously a textual corruption”; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 388 and n. 9; Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 271 n. 8a, 273), though Targ supports MT. See further Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 39-40, 210-11 nn. 34-36; and Chapter 2.

⁴⁰ Repointing MT’s מִהֶם to מִהֶם (so Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 245; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 542; or perhaps emend to נִהֶם) which makes better sense of the parallelism.

and their treasures upon the hump(s) of camels to a people who cannot help (them).”

Isa 31:4 (2x): “For thus Yahweh said to me: ‘Just as the lion [האריה], even the young lion [והכפיר], growls over its prey—when a band of shepherds is called out against it, it is not frightened at their voice, it is not terrified by their noise—thus shall Yahweh of Hosts come down to wage war against Mount Zion and against its hill.’”

Isa 35:9: “No lion [אריה] will be there, no ravenous beast will go up on it; they will not be found there, but the redeemed will walk (freely).”

Isa 38:13: “<I cried out>⁴¹ until morning: Like a lion [כארי], thus has he [Yahweh] broken all my bones. From day until night you finish me.”

Isa 65:25:⁴² “The wolf and the lamb will graze as one, and the lion [ואריה] will eat straw like an ox—but as for the serpent, its food will be dust!—they shall not hurt and they shall not destroy on all my holy mountain says Yahweh.”

Jer 2:15: “Over him the young lions [כפירים] roar, they set their voice. They make his land desolate, his cities are destroyed, without inhabitant.”

Jer 2:30: “In vain I have struck your children; they did not take correction. <A sword>⁴³ devoured <you>⁴⁴ like a destroying lion [כאריה].”

Jer 4:7: “A lion [אריה] has gone up from its thicket, a destroyer of nations has set out. He goes from his place to make your land desolate, your cities will be ruined without inhabitant.”

Jer 5:6: “Therefore a lion [אריה] from the forest will strike them, a wolf of the deserts will destroy them. A leopard is watching their cities: all who come out of them will be torn, for their transgressions are many, their apostasies are numerous.”

⁴¹ Reading שועתי for MT’s שוייתי. Targ reads “I roared,” from נהם, a term also used of human groaning (Ps 38:10; Prov 5:11; Ezek 24:23). For the possibility that MT originally had שאנתי (a term used of both supplicants and lions), see Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 684-85 and 684 n. 24. For the roaring terms, see Appendix 2 (Domain 5). 1QIsa^a reads: שפוחי.

⁴² Cf. Isa 11:7 above on the lion phrase.

⁴³ Following LXX. See next note.

⁴⁴ Emending MT’s אנכלה חרב בכם to אנכלה חרבכם נביאים. The emendation is warranted by the Jeremian context but lacks textual support. See further William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 55 and nn. 30a-b, 107. His explanation that נביאים was added as a gloss on Uriah (p. 107) may be unnecessary. It could more simply be a correction resulting from a corruption initially caused by dittography of בכם. See also Y. Hoffmann, “Jeremiah 2:30,” ZAW 89 (1977): 418-20, who also reads “you,” but reads “my children” and “my sword.” For a different view, see William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986-1996), 1:50-51.

Jer 12:8: “My heritage has become like a lion [כַּאֲרִיָּה] in the forest to me. She sets her voice against me; therefore I hate her.”

Jer 25:38: “He forsook his covert like a young lion [כַּכְפִּיר], for their land has become desolate on account of <the cruel sword>⁴⁵ and on account of his fierce anger.”

Jer 49:19:⁴⁶ “Look, as a lion [כַּאֲרִיָּה] goes up from the pride of the Jordan to the perennial pasture, indeed I will suddenly <chase her sucklings,>⁴⁷ <and the choicest of her rams>⁴⁸ I will single out. For who is like me and who can summon me? And who is this shepherd who stands before me?”⁴⁹

Jer 50:17: “Israel is a hunted sheep, lions [אַרְיֵיָה] drive <it.>⁵⁰ First the king of Assyria ate it and now at the end <>⁵¹ the king of Babylon has gnawed its bones.”

Jer 50:44:⁵² “Look, as a lion [כַּאֲרִיָּה] goes up from the pride of the Jordan to the perennial pasture, indeed I will suddenly <chase her sucklings,>⁵³ <and

⁴⁵ MT’s “wrath of the dove” makes little sense. Read: חָרָב (for MT’s חֲרוֹן) with 20 Hebrew MSS, LXX (μαχαίρας), and Targ; and take דְּיוֹנָה as the feminine participle of יָנָה. So also NRSV. Cf. Jer 46:16 and 50:16. For an extended discussion see McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1:654-56; and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 678 n. 38a; 681.

⁴⁶ Cf. Jer 50:44 below.

⁴⁷ Reading אֲרִיָּצָה עֲלֶיהָ with William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 371 n. 19a. See there for explanation of the corruption. Contrast, however, the MT here (אֲרִיָּצָנוּ) with Jer 50:44: אֲרִיָּצִים (to be read as: אֲרִיָּצִים with Qere).

⁴⁸ Reading אֵילִיָּהּ for MT’s אֵלִיָּהּ וּמִבְּחֹר with Carl Heinrich Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Leipzig: C. H. Tauchnitz, 1905), 482; Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 371 n. 19b; McKane, *Jeremiah*, 2:1214, 1226 (who reads “your rams,” אֵילִיךָ); and many others. MT may be the result of harmonization with the following בְּנֵי questions.

⁴⁹ Cf. McKane, *Jeremiah*, 2:1214: “Who is the shepherd that will withstand me?” (see also *ibid.*, 2:1285 for 50:55) and cf. also LXX and Vulg (see *ibid.*, 2:1226).

⁵⁰ For the emendation, cf. LXX and Vulg; Targ and Syr reflect a plural object. Perhaps read הַדִּיחוּהוּ (Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986], 822) with MT the result of haplography (and graphic confusion between הָ and חָ); or perhaps read הַדִּיחוּהָ with MT the result of haplography caused by the following word (הַרְאִשִּׁין). See also McKane, *Jeremiah*, 2:1269 who suggests that “the construction, a relative clause with אֲשֶׁר suppressed, has perhaps not been grasped (‘which lions have dispersed’).”

⁵¹ Omitting “Nebuchadnezzar” with LXX; McKane, *Jeremiah*, 2:1268; Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 393 n. 17b; and others.

⁵² Cf. Jer 49:19 above.

⁵³ Emending as in Jer 49:19 (see the notes there). The Qere in Jer 50:44 (אֲרִיָּצִים) is preferable. See Jer 49:19: אֲרִיָּצָנוּ, but contrast the different suffix. If the emendation is correct, the final הָ of אֲרִיָּצָה was misread as בְּנֵי (see Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 395 nn. 44-46b).

the choicest of her rams>⁵⁴ I will single out. For who is like me and who can summon me? And who is this shepherd who stands before me?"

Jer 51:38 (3x): "Like young lions [כַּכְּפָרִים] they will roar together; they will growl like lions' cubs [כְּגֹרִי אַרְיֹת]."⁵⁵

Ezek 1:10: "As for the appearance of their faces: the four had the face of a human being, the face of a lion [אַרְיֵה] to the right, the face of an ox to the left, and the face of an eagle."

Ezek 10:14:⁵⁶ "Each one had four faces: the face of the first⁵⁷ was the face of the Cherub, the face of the second was the face of a human being, the third was the face of a lion [אַרְיֵה], and the fourth was the face of an eagle."

Ezek 19:2 (4x): "Declare: What a lioness [לְבִיָּא] among lions [אַרְיֹת] was your mother! She laid down among young lions [כַּכְּפָרִים], she reared her cubs [גֹּרִי]."

Ezek 19:3 (2x): "She raised up⁵⁸ one of her cubs [מִגֹּרִיהָ]: he became a young lion [כַּפִּיר]. He learned to catch prey, he ate humans."

Ezek 19:5 (2x): "When she saw that she had waited,⁵⁹ her hope destroyed, she took <another>⁶⁰ of her cubs [מִגֹּרִיהָ]. She made him (into) a young lion [כַּפִּיר]."

⁵⁴ Emending as in Jer 49:19 (see the notes there).

⁵⁵ Holladay, largely following LXX, emends to read: "<They shall be quick> like lions [they shall roar,] <they are aroused> like lionesses' cubs" (*Jeremiah* 2, 399 nn. 38a-c; see also 429; he is followed by Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52 [WBC 27; Dallas: Word, 1995], 356 n. 38a), but this seems unnecessary. LXX (or its *Vorlage*) could be corrupt and/or interpretive. While MT's נָעַר "to growl" is a *hapax*, the same root and sense is reflected in Syr (see McKane, *Jeremiah*, 2:1328), and then there are the Akk cognates *nallu/iru* ("brüllend, kreisehend"; *AHw* 2:709) and *nallu(ru)* ("brüllen"; *AHw* 2:694; Keown, Scalise, and Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26-52, 356 n. 38b state that the latter may be an Aramaic loan word). More importantly, MT makes sense and its lines balance perfectly (9:9).

⁵⁶ This verse is missing in LXX. Many regard it as a later doublet or variant of 1:10 (so Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 1-24* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 227 n. 14). Others, however, have pointed out that the differences between 1:10 and 10:14 (note, e.g., 1:10: וּפְנֵי-שֹׁר; 10:14: פְּנֵי הַכְּרוֹב), as well as the awkwardness of MT, may be the reason the verse is not present in LXX (see William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19* [WBC 28; Waco: Word, 1986], 148 n. 14.a.-14.b.; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20* [AB 22; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983], 183).

⁵⁷ Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19*, 148 n. 14.a wants each of the four Cherubim to have four different faces.

⁵⁸ Reading the H stem with G. R. Driver, "Ezekiel: Linguistic and Textual Problems," *Bib* 35 (1954): 154 and others (e.g., Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 388 n. 3a; Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19*, 295 n. 3.a, 299).

⁵⁹ MT's נִוְחָלָה is commonly emended to נִוְאָלָה "to be thwarted" (or the like) following Carl Heinrich Cornill (*Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1886], 286-

Ezek 19:6 (2x): “He prowled among the lions [אֲרִיֹּת]; he became a young lion [כַּפִּיר]. He learned to catch prey, he ate humans.”

Ezek 22:25: “<Its princes>⁶¹ in its midst are like the roaring lion [כַּאֲרִי], ripping prey; they have devoured life; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have multiplied the city’s widows in its midst.”

Ezek 32:2: “Mortal, lift up a lament over Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and declare to him: ‘You consider yourself a young lion [כַּפִּיר] among the nations, but you are like <a dragon>⁶² in the seas; you thrash about in your streams, you stir up the water with your feet, you foul <your>⁶³ streams.’”

Ezek 38:13: “Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its young lions [כַּפְרִיָּה]⁶⁴ will say to you: Have you come to seize spoil? Have you gathered your assembly to snatch plunder, to carry off silver and gold, to take cattle and goods, to seize a great amount of booty?”

Ezek 41:19: “A human face (facing) toward the palm tree on the one side and the face of a young lion [כַּפִּיר] (facing) toward the palm tree on the other side. They were made all around the whole temple.”

87). So Zimmerli, who thinks that נִחַלָּה “cannot meaningfully be derived from יָחַל ‘to wait’” (*Ezekiel 1*, 389 n. 5a). But for an explanation that attempts to make sense of the waiting imagery, see Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19*, 301-2.

⁶⁰ Reading אָחַר for MT’s אַחֲרֵי. The emendation is supported by LXX (ἄλλον); graphic similarity between א and ח existed at virtually every stage of Hebrew writing with the result that these letters were often confused (see, e.g., Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* [2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 108). For a defense of אָחַר as “a stylistic phenomenon,” see Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19*, 295 n. 5.b.

⁶¹ Emending to אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂיָאֵה after LXX: ἦς οἱ ἀφηγούμενοι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς. For further contextual arguments in support of the change, see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 465 n. 25a.

⁶² MT reads תַּנִּים; 2 MSS, Syr, and Targ read *tyn* (cf. also Ezek 29:3). Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 25-48* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 106 and n. 3d; 154 and n. 2b takes תַּנִּים as a parallel form and translates “crocodile.”

⁶³ Reading with LXX against MT’s 3mp suffix which is, however, clearly the more difficult (so Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel* [2 vols.; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 2:200 n. 15), though apparently nonsensical, reading.

⁶⁴ LXX, Theodotion, Syr, and Targ translate “villages” and many commentators emend to “traders” or the like (see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 287-88 n. 13b). However, “[r]ecognition of the fact that we have here a typical animal name designating a class of persons or leaders of some sort removes the necessity of emendation” (Patrick D. Miller, Jr., “Animal Names as Designations in Ugaritic and Hebrew,” *UF* 2 [1970]: 183; followed by Block, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 2:25-48, 2:449 and n. 122). See further Appendix 1. Note that Vulg supports MT (*leones*).

Hos 5:14 (2x): “For I am like a lion [כַּשְׁחַל] to Ephraim and like a young lion [וּכְכַפִּיר] to the house of Judah am I.⁶⁵ I myself will rip and depart. I will carry off, and there will be no deliverer.”

Hos 11:10: “They will follow after Yahweh; he roars like a lion [כְּאַרְיֵה]. When he roars, children come trembling from the west.”

Hos 13:7: “So I will be like a lion [כְּמוֹ-שַׁחַל] to them, like a leopard I will lurk upon the way.”

Hos 13:8: “I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of young, I will tear open the covering of their heart. I will devour them there like a lion [כְּלִבְיָא],⁶⁶ (as) a wild beast would rip them open.”

Joel 1:6 (2x): “For a nation, mighty and without number, has gone up against my land. Its teeth are the teeth of a lion [אַרְיֵה], and it has the fangs of a lion [לִבְיָא].”

Amos 3:4 (2x): “Does a lion [אַרְיֵה] roar in the forest without having any prey? Does a young lion [כַּפִּיר] raise its voice from its den without having captured anything?”

Amos 3:8: “The lion [אַרְיֵה] has roared, who is not afraid? < >⁶⁷ Yahweh has spoken, who will not prophesy?”

Amos 3:12: “Thus says Yahweh: ‘Just as the shepherd rescues two legs or a piece of an ear from the mouth of the lion [הָאַרִי], thus shall the children of Israel who dwell in Samaria be saved, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed.’”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Against the stichometry of *BHS*, the first אֲנִי of the second line should be read with the second half of the first line. An *inclusio* or chiasm of sorts is produced and the syllabification is equalized (before: 11:8/9:6; after: 11:10/7:6). The triply emphatic אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי of MT is also awkward.

⁶⁶ Many emend this line in the light of LXX (καὶ καταφάγονται αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖ σκύμνοι δρυμῶν) to read כְּלִבְיָא שֶׁם וְאֶכְלוּם or the like (see, e.g., Brigitte Seifert, *Metaphorisches Reden von Gott im Hoseabuch* [FRLANT 166; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996], 170-71 n. d, who reads a plural determined Aramaic כְּלִבְיָא unconvincingly; on p. 181, Seifert states that “dogs” is not a metaphor for Yahweh). But Kaplan (“The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 240 n. 35) has pointed out that in LXX, σκύμνος is never used to translate כְּלָב, but only for words denoting “cub” or “lion” or the like (see Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint* [2d ed.; repr.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 1278). Moreover, Kaplan takes the presence of δρυμῶν (minus in MT) to be evidence that LXX is based on a different *Vorlage*.

⁶⁷ Deleting אֲנִי as “superfluous, unbalancing the metrical parallelism with v 8a....The text-critical evidence indicates that most of the occurrences of this word in the book of Amos are secondary” (Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977], 181 n. i).

⁶⁸ This last phrase is notoriously difficult. For some of the options and the difficulties involved, see Shalom M. Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 120-22; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 196-98; J. Alberto Soggin,

Amos 5:19: “Just as when a man flees from the lion [הַאֲרִי] and encounters the bear; or goes to his house and rests his hand upon the wall and the snake bites it.”

Micah 5:7 (2x): “The remnant of Jacob will be <>⁶⁹ in the midst of many peoples like a lion [כְּאַרְיֵה] among the animals of the forest, like a young lion [כְּכַפִּיר] among flocks of sheep, which, when it crosses through, treads down and tears, and there is no deliverer.”

Nah 2:12 (6x): “Where is the den of the lions [אַרְיֹת] and the pasture⁷⁰ of the young lions [לְכַפְרִים], where the lion [אַרְיֵה] (and) lion [לְבִיא]⁷¹ walked there, the lion’s cub [נִר אַרְיֵה] with no one to disturb (them)?”

Nah 2:13 (3x): “The lion [אַרְיֵה] has ripped enough for his female cubs [נְרוֹתָיו] and strangled for his lionesses [לְלִבְאֲתָיו]. He has filled his caves with prey and his dens with torn flesh.”

Nah 2:14: “Behold, I am against you,⁷² says Yahweh of Hosts: I will burn <your abundance>⁷³ with smoke and the sword will devour your young

The Prophet Amos: A Translation and Commentary (London: SCM, 1987), 61-62; and Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Amos* (AB 24A; New York: Doubleday, 1989), 408-10. Though the phrase is difficult, the sense is clear enough (Paul, *Amos*, 122) and does not significantly impact the understanding of the lion imagery in the first part of the verse. The translation of this last clause, therefore, follows NRSV.

⁶⁹ Deleting בְּנִיִּים here with LXX. See Hans Walter Wolff, *Micah: A Commentary* (CC; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990), 150-51 and 151 n. 6a; William McKane, *Micah: Introduction and Commentary* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 164, 159; James Luther Mays, *Micah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 121 n. a.

⁷⁰ MT’s וּמְרֵעָה is often emended to וּמְעָרָה following Julius Wellhausen (*Die kleinen Propheten übersetzt und erklärt* [4th ed.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1963], 162) and others (e.g., J. J. M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991], 62 n. 28). Such an emendation can be challenged, however, zoologically, as lions do not typically live in caves. Such a judgment depends, of course, on the species of animal referred to and the semantic data is at least somewhat mixed. See the discussion in Appendix 2 (Domain 6).

⁷¹ MT’s asyndetic לְבִיא אַרְיֵה could be a case where two different, alternative readings have both been preserved. If so, LXX’s τοῦ εἰσελθεῖν can be taken as a misunderstanding of the situation in the Hebrew *Vorlage* or as an attempt to interpret that situation. Conversely, LXX could be a case of genuine misreading (לְבִיא for לְבִיא). Many follow LXX (cf. also Targ); see, e.g., Wellhausen, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 162; and Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, 62 n. 29, who explains the MT as a corruption “given all the words for lion already mentioned in the passage.” For a defense of MT on the basis of asyndetic parataxis, see Kaplan, “The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 42-44, 88, 224 n. 41; Yitzhak Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (AOAT 210; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984), 142, who translates “where the leonine lion walked.” Note further, Gen 49:9, which also contains אַרְיֵה followed closely (and paralleled) by לְבִיא, in context with נִר אַרְיֵה as also here in Nah 2:12. An understanding of אַרְיֵה לְבִיא as a kind of compound lion term also suits the parallelism well as the B term is also compound: נִר אַרְיֵה.

lions [וכפיריך]. I will eliminate your prey from the land and the sound of your messengers will be heard no longer.”

Zeph 3:3: “Its princes in its midst are roaring lions [אריית]; its judges are evening wolves,⁷⁴ they leave nothing until the morning.”⁷⁵

Zech 11:3: “Listen! (to) the wail of the shepherds, for their glory is ruined. Listen! (to) the roar of the young lions [כפירים] for the pride of the Jordan is ruined.”

Ps 7:3: “Lest he [my pursuer] rip my life like a lion [כאריה], dragging off⁷⁶ with no deliverer.”

Ps 10:9: “He lurks in secret like a lion [כאריה] in his covert; he lurks in order to seize the poor. He seizes the poor when he drags him into his net.”

Ps 17:12 (2x): “His likeness is like a lion [כאריה] who longs to tear, and like a young lion [וככפיר] waiting in hiding.”

Ps 22:14: “They open their mouth against me, a⁷⁷ roaring and rending lion [אריה].”

⁷² Despite the feminine suffix, Roberts argues that all of the suffixes, “some of which are written defectively (-*k%*) and some with the *mater* (-*k%*), should be read as second masculine singular referring back to the lion, the king of Nineveh” (*Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, 62-63 n. 31; so also Wellhausen, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 162).

⁷³ Emending MT’s רכבה to רבבה, after LXX: πῆλθός σος. The second-person suffix is also reflected in Targ and Vulg. For additional contextual arguments supporting the emendation and explaining the MT, see Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, 63 n. 32.

⁷⁴ Perhaps emend to זאבי ערבה, “wolves of the steppe/desert” (so Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, 207, who compares Jer 5:6 and Hab 1:8). If so, MT is probably influenced by בקר later in the line. בקר there, however, may be an indication that MT’s ערב is correct here. Moreover, זאב is found with ערב in Hab 1:8 and Gen 49:27 (cf. the PNs at Judg 7:25). Jer 5:6 connects זאב with ערבה, but does so with the plural (ערבות), and the Versions are ambiguous; some, at least, reading ערב (Aquila, Syr, Targ, Vulg).

⁷⁵ The translation follows LXX and Vulg (so also NRSV). MT reads literally: “They do not gnaw bones in the morning.” For a discussion of this famous crux, see Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, 207, 212-13; John Merlin Powis Smith, *Micah, Zephaniah and Nahum* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1974), 239, 244-45.

⁷⁶ LXX takes פרק with ואין (ἡ δὲ λυτρουμένης). Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (CC; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 167 thinks this is the best option on the basis of the use of פרק as “rescue” elsewhere; but this is only truly clear with בן. Kraus cannot explain the present state of MT. However, the notion of a lion dragging prey off is common in textual, iconographical, and zoological contexts. Moreover, the phrase ואין מציל belongs to the semantic domain of lion imagery (see Appendix 2 Domain 3). Hence, the MT should be retained; the LXX misunderstood the lion repertoire. Cf. Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC 19; Waco: Word, 1983), 98 n. 3.c.

⁷⁷ One MS and several of the Versions make the comparison explicit by reading כ (or its equivalent). Emendation of MT is unnecessary, however.

- Ps 22:17: “For the dogs surround me, the congregation of evildoers has encompassed me, like a lion [כֹּאֲרִי] <...> my hands and my feet.”⁷⁸
- Ps 22:22: “Save me from the mouth of the lion [אֲרִיָּה] and from the horns of the wild oxen. You have delivered me!”⁷⁹
- Ps 34:11: “The young lions [כַּפִּירִים] are impoverished and hungry, but those who seek Yahweh will not lack any good (thing).”
- Ps 35:17: “O Lord, how long will you watch? Deliver me from their ravages,⁸⁰ my only life from the young lions [מַכַּפִּירִים].”
- Ps 57:5: “As for my soul: I lie down in the midst of lions [לְבָאִים] aflame for human children. Their teeth are spear(s) and arrows, their tongue is a sharp sword.”
- Ps 58:7: “O God, rip out their teeth from their mouth, break the fangs⁸¹ of the young lions [כַּפִּירִים], O Yahweh.”
- Ps 91:13 (2x): “You will ride on the lion [שָׂחַל]⁸² and the snake. You will tread on the young lion [כַּפִּיר] and serpent.”

⁷⁸ Virtually all commentators think כֹּאֲרִי as present and pointed in MT is corrupt. See, e.g., Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 292 n. 16j, 297; Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I: 1-50* (AB 16; New York: Doubleday, 1966), 141 (but compare the later modification of his view in idem, “The Verb *לָחַץ*, ‘To Pick Clean’ in Ps. XXII 17,” VT 24 [1974]: 370-71); J. J. M. Roberts, “A New Root for an Old Crux, Ps. XXII 17c,” VT 23 (1973): 247-52; Gregory Vall, “Psalm 22:17b: ‘The Old Guess,’” JBL 116 (1997): 45-56; the response to Vall by John Kaltner, “Psalm 22:17b: Second Guessing ‘The Old Guess,’” JBL 117 (1998): 503-6; and the response to Vall and Kaltner in Brent A. Strawn, “Psalm 22:17b: More Guessing,” JBL 119 (2000): 439-51. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 196 nn. 14.a. and 17.b. explains the presence of כֹּאֲרִי in 22:17 as a gloss originally intended to clarify why אֲרִיָּה in 22:14 did not have the preposition (cf. LXX); see further L. C. Allen, “Cuckoos in the Textual Nest at 2 Kings xx.13; Isa. xlii.10; xlix.24; Ps xxii.17; 2 Chron. v.9,” JTS 22 (1971): 148-50. But as this is the only occurrence of אֲרִי in the Psalms (Allen, “Cuckoos,” 148), it seems odd that the more familiar אֲרִיָּה would be glossed by an unfamiliar term. After an extensive discussion, Kaplan (“The Lion in the Hebrew Bible,” 23-28) summarizes the two options: 1) understand כֹּאֲרִי as some sort of verb (or emend to such a verb) with the commentators (Kaplan himself prefers כִּוֵּר “to bind” or “annoint”); or 2) posit that the verb dropped out (cf. NJPSV [Tanakh]). An attempt to defend the latter on iconographical grounds is found in Strawn, “Psalm 22:17b: More Guessing,” 439-51.

⁷⁹ For the translation of the final half-line, see Patrick D. Miller, Jr., “Synonymous-Sequential Parallelism in the Psalms,” Bib 61 (1980): 256-60.

⁸⁰ Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 391 n. 17p suggests emending to נוֹשְׂאֵימִם (“from those that roar”); Dahood, *Psalms I*, 214 suggests “from their pits.” Kraus’s emendation is suspect as too smooth; Dahood’s does not improve the sense much, if at all. MT can stand.

⁸¹ On מִלֵּחַשׁוֹת, a *hapax*, see Appendix 2 (Domain 1.B.8) and note Mitchell Dahood, “The Etymology of *MAL TAʾOT* (Ps 58,7),” CBQ 17 (1955): 180-83; and Jo Ann Hackett and John Huehnergard, “On Breaking Teeth,” HTR 77 (1984): 259-75, especially 260-62.

⁸² For the LXX reading (ἀσπίδα), see Appendix 1.

Ps 104:21: “The young lions [הכפירים] are roaring for the prey, and seeking their food from God.”

Job 4:10 (3x): “The roar of the lion [אריה], the voice of the lion [שחל], and the teeth of the young lions [כפירים] are broken.”

Job 4:11 (2x): “The lion [ליש] perishes from lack of prey, and the children of the lion [יבני לביא] are scattered.”

Job 10:16: “<Bold>⁸³ as a lion [כשחל] you hunt me. You continually show yourself wonderful against me.”

Job 28:8: “The proud animals have not trodden it, the lion [שחל]⁸⁴ has not passed over it.”

Job 38:39 (2x): “Do you hunt prey for the lion [ללביא] or satisfy the appetite of young lions [כפירים]?”

Prov 19:12: “The rage of a king is the growling of a young lion [ככפיר], but his favor is like dew on the grass.”

Prov 20:2: “The terror of a king is the growling of a young lion [ככפיר]. The one who incites him forfeits his life.”

Prov 22:13: “The sluggard says: ‘There is a lion [ארי] outside! I will be killed in the midst of the streets!’”

Prov 26:13 (2x): “The sluggard says: ‘There is a lion [שחל] in the road, a lion [ארי] on the streets!’”

Prov 28:1: “The wicked flee⁸⁵ when there is no pursuer, but the righteous⁸⁶ wait like a young lion [ככפיר].”

Prov 28:15: “An evil ruler over a poor people is a roaring lion [ארי] and a charging bear.”

Prov 30:30: “The lion [ליש], mighty among animals, which does not turn back from anything.”

⁸³ Reading ונאֵה for MT’s syntactically awkward וינאֵה (so also Marvin H. Pope, *Job* [AB 15; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965], 78-79; Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation, and Special Studies* [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 5738/1978], 114; John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 188 n. 4). The ך could be explained by dittography coupled with graphic confusion.

⁸⁴ For the view of Mowinckel, tentatively adopted by Pope, see Appendix 1.

⁸⁵ Either read רשע as collective singular with grammatically plural verb (MT: נסו) or emend with one MS, LXX, and Vulg to the singular נס, with the ן resulting from dittography.

⁸⁶ Several MSS, LXX, and Vulg reflect the singular וצדיק, though this may be an attempt to make sense of singular יבטה. MT is clearly the more difficult reading. Perhaps read MT’s וצדיקים as a complex plural, or less plausibly, as singular + enclitic ׁ, secondarily “corrected” to the plural ending.

Song 4:8: “With me from Lebanon, bride, with me from Lebanon you will come. You will descend⁸⁷ from the peak of Amana, from the peak of Senir and Hermon, from the dens of lions [אֲרִיִּית], from the mountains of leopards.”

Ecc 9:4: “Who is the one who <chooses>⁸⁸ To all the living there is certitude, <and (there is) finality to the dead.>⁸⁹ For a living dog is better than the dead lion [הָאֲרִיָּה].”

Lam 3:10: “He is a lurking bear to me, a lion [Kethib: אֲרִיָּה; Qere: אֲרִי]⁹⁰ in hiding.”

Lam 4:3: “Even <jackals>⁹¹ offer the breast, nurse their young [גִּירִיָּהֵן], but the daughter⁹² of my people has become cruel, like <the ostriches>⁹³ in the wilderness.”

Dan 6:8 (Aram): “All the magistrates of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish a decree and enforce an edict, that for thirty days anyone who prays a prayer to anyone, divine or human, except to you, O king, will be thrown into a den of lions [אֲרִיִּוֹתָא].”

Dan 6:13 (Aram): “Then they drew near and said before the king concerning the edict:⁹⁴ ‘O king, did you not sign an edict, that for thirty days anyone who prays to anyone, divine or human, except to you, O king, would be

⁸⁷ Or perhaps: “You will gaze” (II שׁוּר).

⁸⁸ Repointing MT’s Dp (unattested in Biblical Hebrew) imperfect to simple G imperfect. See Choon-Leong Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 300. Reading with MT’s Qere is unnecessary once the latter portion of the verse has been clarified. See next note.

⁸⁹ Emending MT’s אֶל־הַמָּתִים to וְאַחֲרָיו אֶל־הַמָּתִים and transposing it from the end of 9:3 to this point in 9:4 with Seow (*Ecclesiastes*, 300). The resulting sense is much improved for both verses.

⁹⁰ Most MSS read: אֲרִי with Qere. See the discussion of the Kethib/Qere issue in Chapter 2 (§2.1.2).

⁹¹ Either emend with Qere to תַּנִּים or take Kethib’s תַּנִּין as the Aramaic plural ending. Among those who read “jackal” are Iain W. Provan, *Lamentations* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); Delbert R. Hillers, *Lamentations* (rev. ed.; AB 7A; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 138-39; and Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Klagelieder (Threni)* (2d ed.; BKAT 20; Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1960), 71-72. Even so, the Kethib is interesting and is supported by 2 MSS; note also that LXX read the MT’s תַּנִּין as δράκοντες. See the discussion of this text in Appendix 1.

⁹² Some read plural with LXX (θυγατέρες) and Targ. Cf. Kraus, *Klagelieder*, 72.

⁹³ So Qere and most MSS and Versions.

⁹⁴ As עַל־אֲסָר is missing in Syr and Theodotion, some regard it as a plus to be removed. So John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 256 n. 28, though he notes that “it is found already in 4QDan^b” (עַל־אֲסָר). Given this early support for MT, it is retained here.

thrown into a den of lions [אַרְיֹתָא]?⁹⁵ The king answered and said: ‘This word stands, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.’”

Dan 6:17 (Aram): “Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions [אַרְיֹתָא]. The king answered and said to Daniel: ‘May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you.’”⁹⁶

Dan 6:20 (Aram): “Then, at dawn, the king got up at daylight⁹⁷ and in haste went to the den of lions [אַרְיֹתָא].”

Dan 6:21 (Aram): “And when he approached the den of Daniel, he cried out with an anxious voice. The king answered and said to Daniel: ‘Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you serve continually been able to deliver you from the lions [מִן־אַרְיֹתָא]?”

Dan 6:23 (Aram): “My God sent his angel and he shut the mouth(s) of the lions [אַרְיֹתָא] and they did not hurt me, because I was found innocent before him; and also before you, O king, I have not done wrong.”

Dan 6:25 (Aram) (2x): “The king commanded, and those men who had slandered Daniel were brought and thrown into the den of lions [אַרְיֹתָא]—they, their children, and their wives. And they had not yet reached the bottom of the den when the lions [אַרְיֹתָא] overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.”

Dan 6:28 (Aram): “He [God] is a deliverer and a rescuer, a worker of signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for he saved Daniel from the paw of the lions [אַרְיֹתָא].”

Dan 7:4 (Aram): “The first was like a lion [כְּאַרְיֵה] and had eagles’ wings. As I watched, its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a human; and a human heart was given to it.”

1 Chr 11:22:⁹⁸ “Benaiah,⁹⁹ son of Jehoiada, from Kabzeel,¹⁰⁰ was a man¹⁰¹ of valor,¹⁰² great in deeds. He struck the two Ariel¹⁰³ of Moab and he went

⁹⁵ Note the error in B19^A: אַרְיֹתָא; most editions and MSS read the correct form.

⁹⁶ Note Collins, *Daniel*, 258, who opts for the other translation option: “will save you.”

⁹⁷ “At daylight” (בִּנְהָא) may be a gloss “that crept into the text in the wrong place” (Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* [AB 23; Garden City: Doubleday, 1978], 196), but it is found in 4QDan^b and is reflected in Theodotion (see Collins, *Daniel*, 258 n. 50). “If both terms are original, they may perhaps be understood as strengthening each other: ‘at the crack of dawn’” (Hartman and Di Lella, *Daniel*, 196).

⁹⁸ Cf. 2 Sam 23:20 above.

⁹⁹ MT: בְּנֵיָה; contrast 2 Sam 23:20: וּבְנֵיָהּ.

¹⁰⁰ MT: מִקְבֻצָּאֵל; cf. 2 Sam 23:20: מִקְבֻצָּאֵל.

down and killed the lion [הארי]¹⁰⁴ in the midst of the pit¹⁰⁵ on a snowy day.”

- 1 Chr 12:9: “Some of the Gadites joined David at the stronghold in the wilderness: (They were) valiant warriors, experienced soldiers, skilled with lance and spear, whose faces were the faces of a lion [אריה], and who were as swift as gazelles on the mountains.”
- 2 Chr 9:18:¹⁰⁶ “And¹⁰⁷ the throne had six steps as well as <a calf>¹⁰⁸ <overlaid>¹⁰⁹ with gold. On each side were arm rests and two lions [אריה] were standing beside the arm rests.”
- 2 Chr 9:19:¹¹⁰ “And twelve lions [אריה] were standing there¹¹² on each side of the six steps. The like has not been made in any kingdom.”¹¹³

¹⁰¹ MT has בן in addition to איש. This may be a conflation of variant readings (see Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 247; and Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*, 403 n. f) and, in any event, is missing in Syr.

¹⁰² Contrast the MT of 2 Sam 23:20: חי, but see the notes to that text above.

¹⁰³ MT: אריאל; cf. 2 Sam 23:20: אריאל.

¹⁰⁴ Contrast Kethib of 2 Sam 23:20: האריה; the Qere could be an instance of later harmonization. See the discussion above and in Chapter 2 (§2.1.2).

¹⁰⁵ MT: הבור; cf. 2 Sam 23:20: הבאר.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. 1 Kgs 10:19 above.

¹⁰⁷ MT: ושש; contrast 1 Kgs 10:19: שש.

¹⁰⁸ Reading כבש for MT's כבש, a word otherwise unattested in the Hebrew Bible, but frequent in Rabbinic Hebrew (see Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* [2 vols.; New York: Judaica, 1992], 1:611). At least one MS and Edition support the emendation (see W. Baumgartner in *BHS*) and this brings the Chronicles' text in line with (the repointed) MT of 1 Kgs 10:19: וראש-ענל (see the notes there). As it stands, MT might imply two different types of ascent to the throne: stairs and an incline of some sort (see Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 641)—another reason to emend as above.

¹⁰⁹ Transposing בזהב after מאחזים; cf. LXX; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 632. Though some consider מאחזים to be an error for MT at 1 Kgs 10:19 (מאחזי), according to Montgomery and Gehman (*Kings*, 230) and others (e.g., *HALOT* 1:32), the former may reflect Akk *uḫ uḫ*, “overlaid” (see *AHW* 3:1404).

¹¹⁰ Cf. 1 Kgs 10:20 above.

¹¹¹ Contrast 1 Kgs 10:20: אריים.

¹¹² Cf. the corresponding note at 1 Kgs 10:20.

¹¹³ MT: ממלכה; contrast 1 Kgs 10:20: ממלכות.

FIGURES

Figures¹

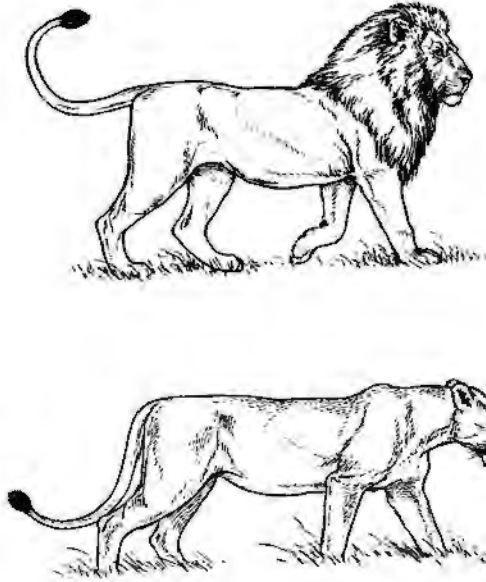


Fig. 2.1. African lions (*Panthera leo*). After Schaller, *The Serengeti Lion*, figs. 23 (top) and 19 (top).

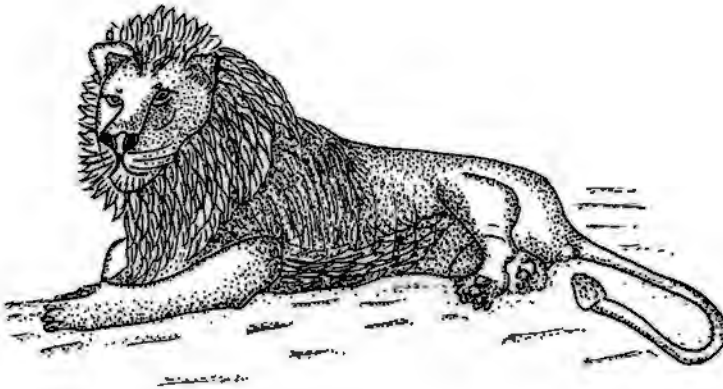


Fig. 2.2. Lion showing some characteristics similar to the Persian lion (*Panthera leo persica*) – in particular note the visible ears and mane all the way down the torso. Cf. “Asiatic Lion: *Panthera leo persica* (Meyer, 1826),” n.p.

¹ For considerations of space, bibliographical and image information has been kept to a minimum. Further data may be found in the Bibliography and in the specific sources cited.

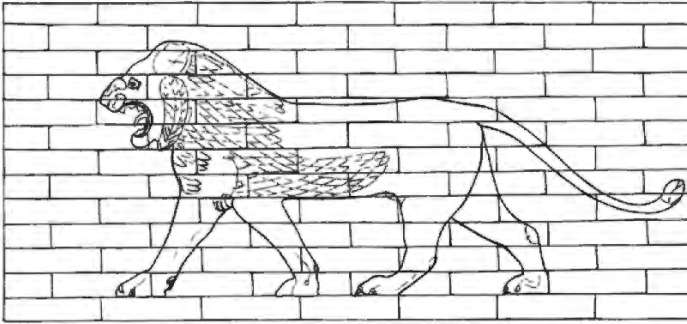


Fig. 2.3. Glazed brick relief; Babylon ("The Processional Way" leading to the Ishtar Gate); Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562). Cf. Oates, *Babylon*, fig. 104.

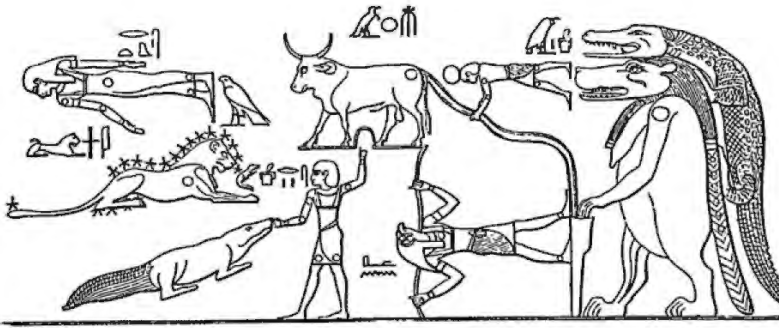


Fig. 2.4. Wall painting (star chart of the North Pole); Tomb of Seti I (1294-1279). After Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 348.



Fig. 2.5. Clay tablet; Uruk; Seleucid period (Antiochus I). After Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*, fig. 159.



Fig. 3.1. Cylinder seal; Megiddo; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 52.

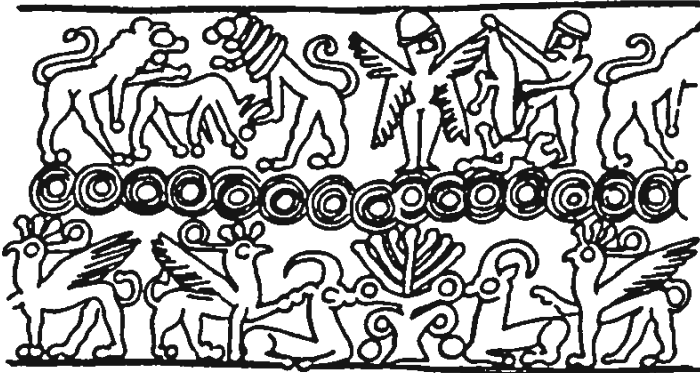


Fig. 3.2. Hematite cylinder seal; Akko; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 53.



Fig. 3.3. Bronze pendant; Akko; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 70.

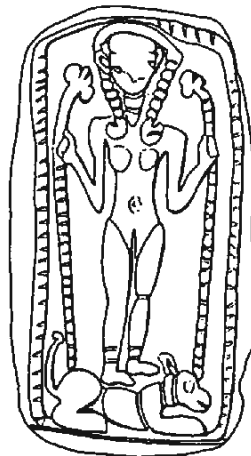


Fig. 3.4. Terra-cotta tablet; Tel Harashim; LBA. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 221.



Fig. 3.5. Ewer; Lachish Fosse Temple; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 81.

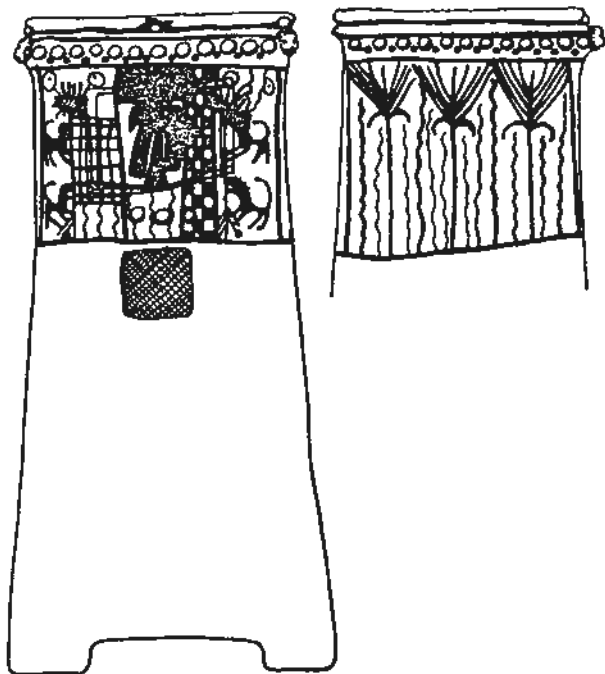


Fig. 3.6. Clay stand; Megiddo; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 55a.

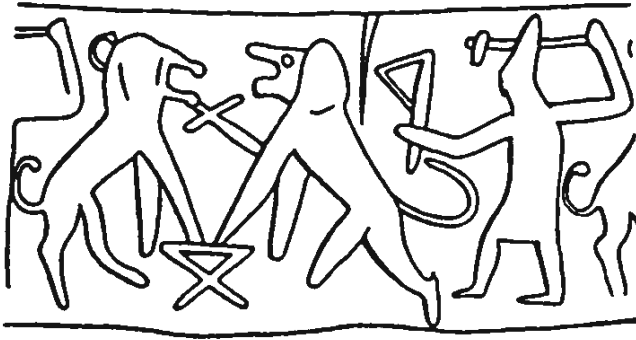


Fig. 3.7. Cylinder seal; Beth-Shean; 14th c. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 88a.



Fig. 3.8. Cylinder seal; Akko; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 88b.

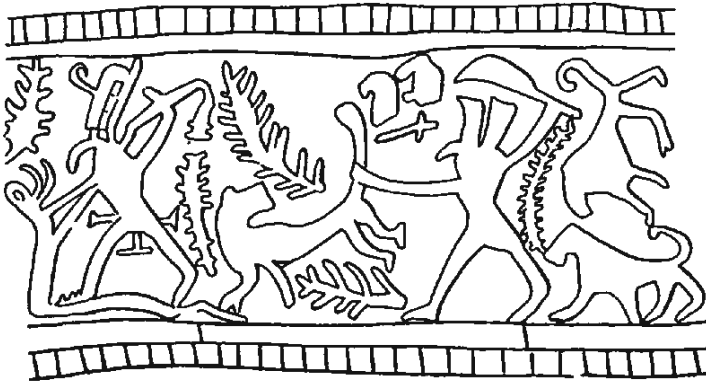


Fig. 3.9. Cylinder seal; Tell es-Safi; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 89.



Fig. 3.10. Cylinder seal; Tell el-ḥAjjul; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 90a.



Fig. 3.11. Seal; Lachish; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 101a.



Fig. 3.12. Seal; Tell el-Farḥah (S.); LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 100.

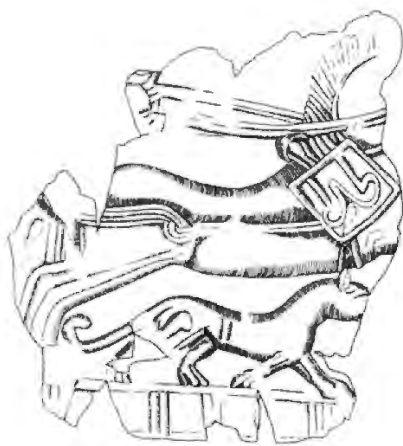


Fig. 3.13. Ivory fragment; Megiddo; LBA (ca. 1350-1150). After Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories*, pl. 9 no. 36; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 62.

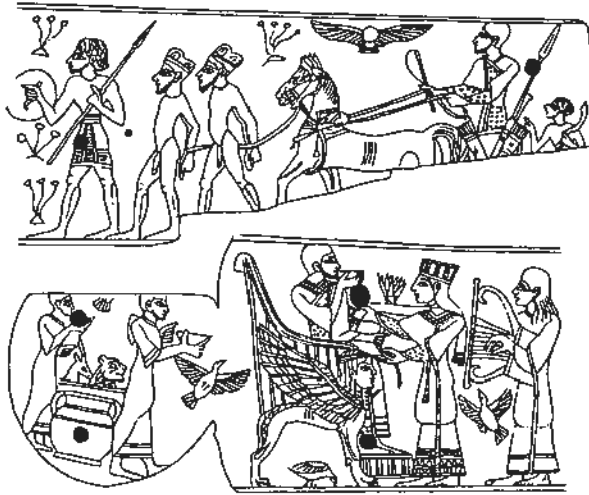


Fig. 3.14. Ivory plaque; Megiddo; LBA. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 65.

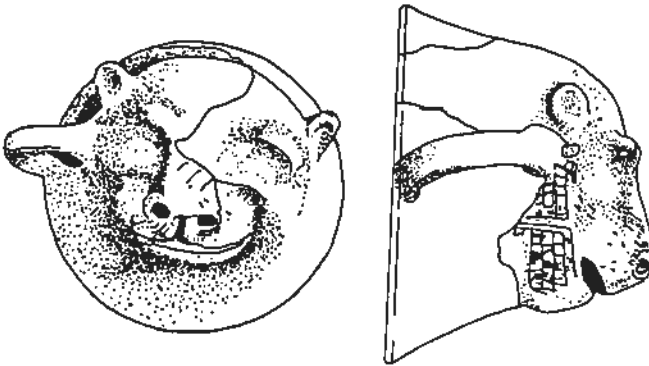


Fig. 3.15. Mug; Tel Zeror; LBA. After Weippert, *Palästina in vorhellenistischer Zeit*, Abb. 4.10.

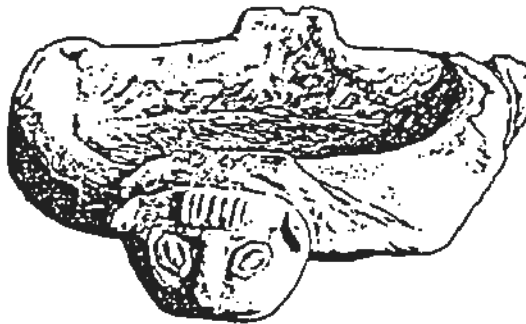


Fig. 3.16. Libation bowl; Tell Beit Mirsim (Stratum C); LBA (date debated; possibly IA II). After Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, Abb. 35.

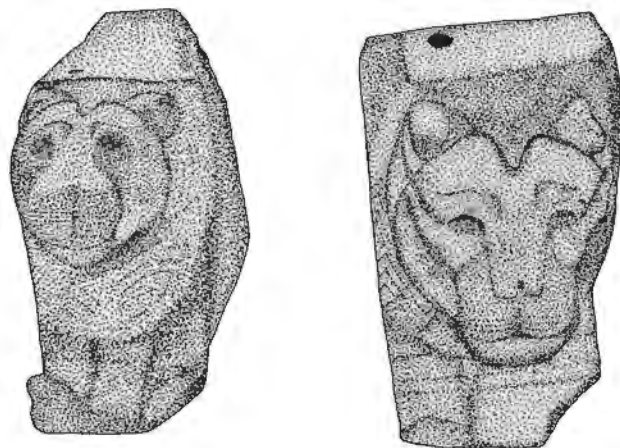


Fig. 3.17. Basalt orthostat; Hazor (Area H, Stratum IB); LBA. Cf. Yadin et al., *Hazor III-IV*, Pl. CCCXXVIII.

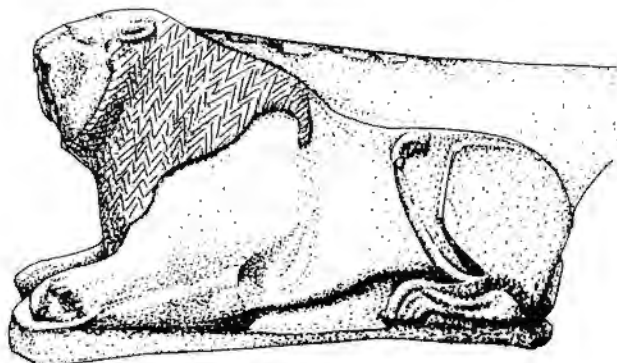


Fig. 3.18. Basalt orthostat; Hazor; LBA. Cf. Ben-Tor and Rubiato, "Excavating Hazor Part II," *BAR* 25, no. 3 (May/June 1999): 34.

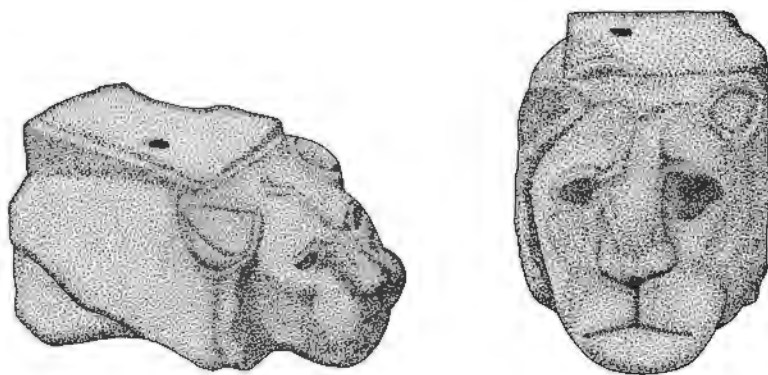


Fig. 3.19. Basalt orthostat; Hazor (Area A); LBA. Cf. Yadin et al., *Hazor III-IV*, Pl. CCCXXIX.

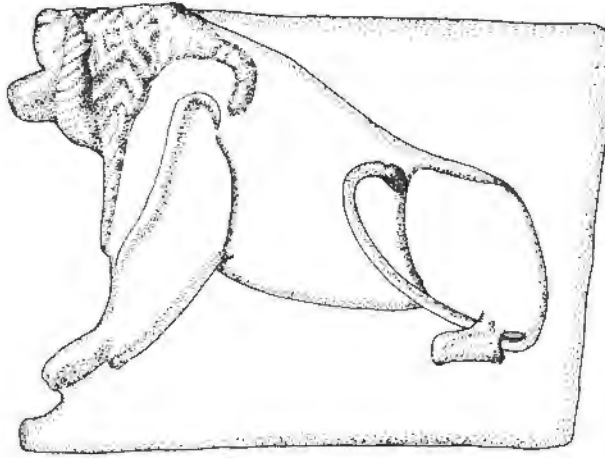


Fig. 3.20. Orthostat; Hazor (Area C); LBA. Cf. Yadin et al., *Hazor I*, Pl. XXX.2.

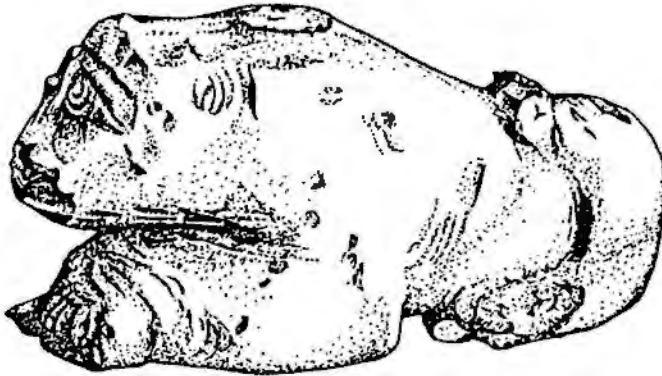


Fig. 3.21. Limestone orthostat; Tell Beit Mirsim (Stratum C); LBA (date debated; possibly IA II). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 201.



Fig. 3.22. Reconstruction of orthostat in fig. 3.21. After Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, Abb. 36.

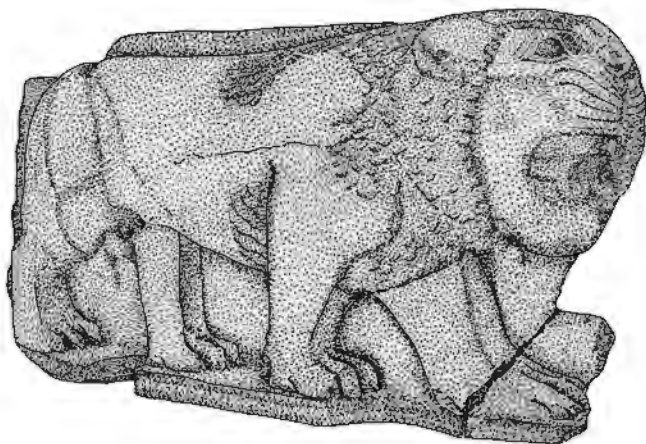


Fig. 3.23. Basalt orthostat; Sheikh Saḥad; LBA or IA I. Cf. Bachmann, *Die strukturalistische Artefakt- und Kunstanalyse*, Abb. 24.

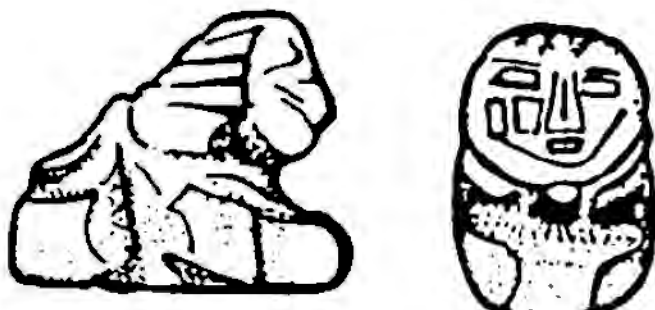


Fig. 3.24. Cornelian amulet; Tell el-Farḥah (S.); LBA. After Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, Abb. 781.

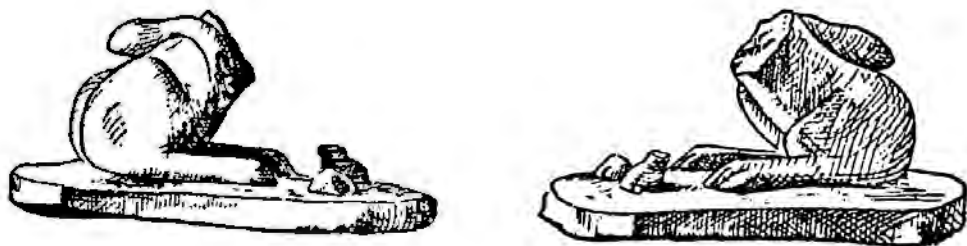


Fig. 3.25. Bronze weight (?); Hazor (Area F); LBA. After Yadin et al., *Hazor II*, Pl. CL.14.

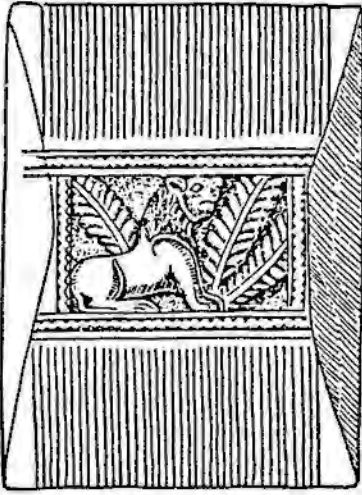


Fig. 3.26. Ivory comb; Megiddo; LBA.
After Bodenheimer, *Animal and Man in Bible Lands*, fig. 41.4; reconstructed.

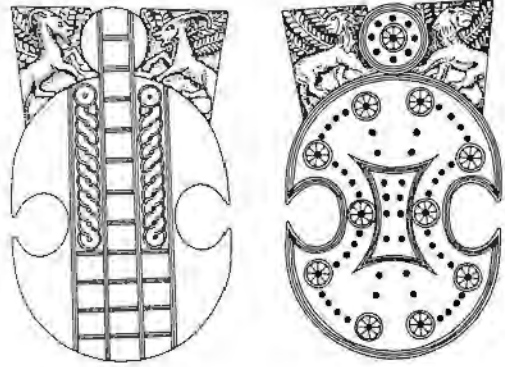


Fig. 3.27. Ivory gameboard; Megiddo; LBA.
After Weippert, *Palästina in vorhellenistischer Zeit*, Abb. 3.61.

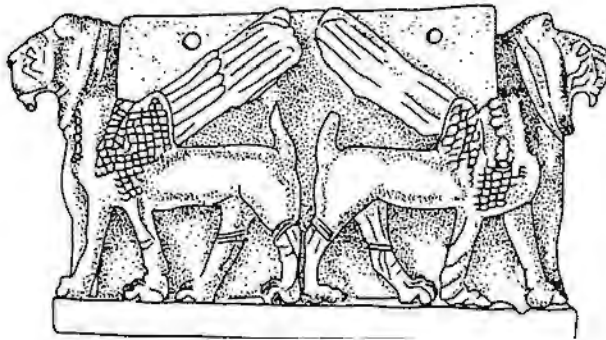
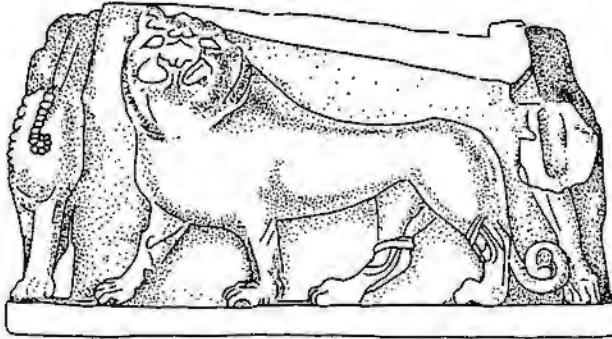


Fig. 3.28. Ivory box; Megiddo (Stratum VIIA); LBA. After Weippert, *Palästina in vorhellenistischer Zeit*, Abb. 3.63.

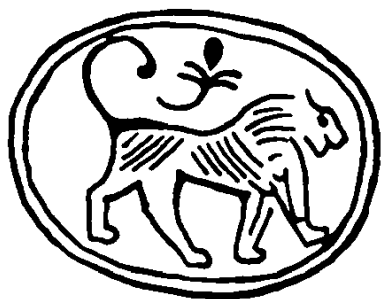


Fig. 3.29. Scarab; Tell el-ḥAjjul; LBA (ca. 1530-1479). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 149 Nr. 126.



Fig. 3.30. Rectangular plate seal; Tell el-ḥAjjul; LBA (ca. 1400-1300). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 219 Nr. 342.

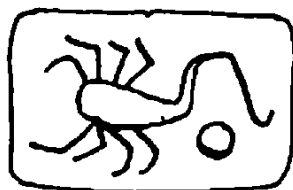


Fig. 3.31. Rectangular two-sided plate seal; Akko; LBA (ca. 1400-1300). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 579 Nr. 138.

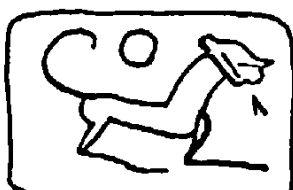


Fig. 3.32. Scarab; Aseka; LBA (ca. 1400-1190). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 743 Nr. 22.



Fig. 3.33. Scarab; Ashdod; LBA (ca. 1400-1350). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 675 Nr. 33.



Fig. 3.34. Limestone conoid; Megiddo; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 165c.

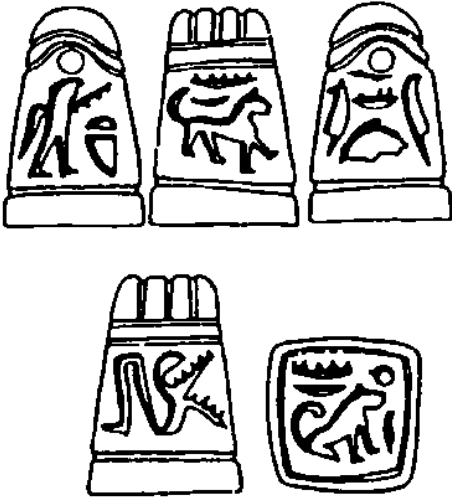


Fig. 3.35. Pyramidal seal; Tel Gerisa; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 131.



Fig. 3.36. Scarab; Tel Gerisa (Area B, Locus 160); IA I (ca. 1000-900). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 349 Abb. 32.

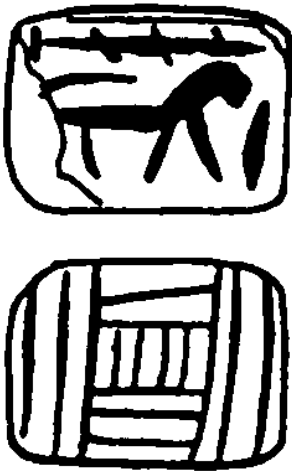


Fig. 3.37. Seal; Lachish; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 133a.

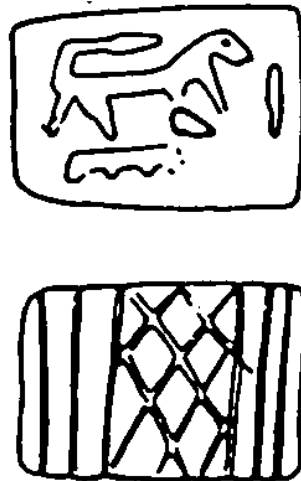


Fig. 3.38. Seal; Tell es-Sabidiyeh; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 133b.



Fig. 3.39. Seal; Beth-Shean; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 133d.



Fig. 3.40. Seal; Pella; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 133c.



Fig. 3.41. Seal; Megiddo; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 133e.



Fig. 3.42. Scarab; Megiddo; IA I (12th or 11th c.). After Keel, *Studien IV*, Taf. 9,19.



Fig. 3.43. Seal; Beth-Shemesh (Northwest cemetery; Grave 1); IA I or early IA II (ca. 950-850). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 349 Abb. 33.

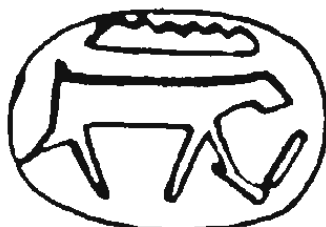


Fig. 3.44. Seal; Beth-Shemesh (same grave as fig. 3.43); IA I or early IA II (ca. 950-850). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 349 Abb. 34.



Fig. 3.45. Seal; Qarn Hayyin; IA I. After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 349 Abb. 35.



Fig. 3.46. Seal amulet; Megiddo; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 134a.



Fig. 3.47. Scarab; Tell el-Farḥah (S.); IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 138a.



Fig. 3.48. Scarab; Lachish; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 138b.

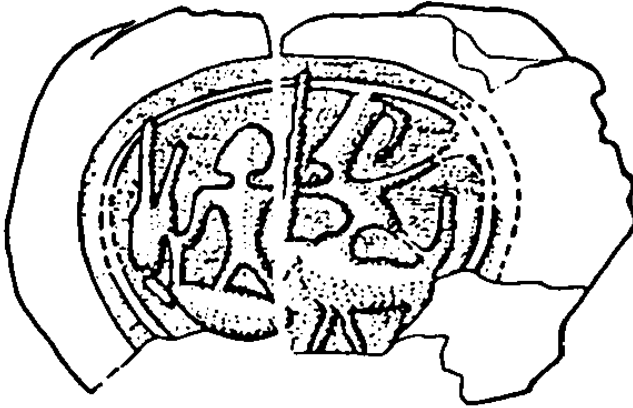


Fig. 3.49. Clay bulla; Tell Keisan; IA I (ca. 1050-1000). After Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods*, Pl. 49, BM 57.

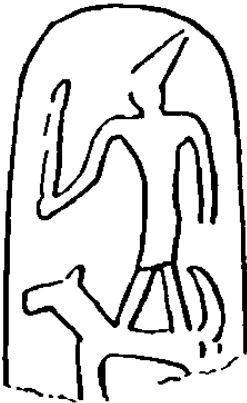


Fig. 3.50. Clay seal impression; Tell el-Farḥah (S.) (Stratum X); IA I (ca. 1150-1000). After Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods*, Pl. 50, BM65.

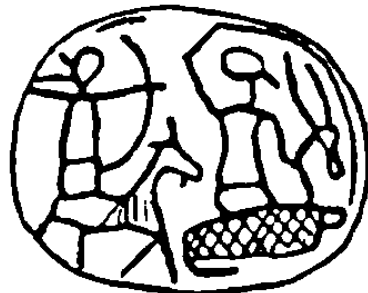


Fig. 3.51. Scarab; Akko; IA I (ca. 1130-945). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 561 Nr. 86.

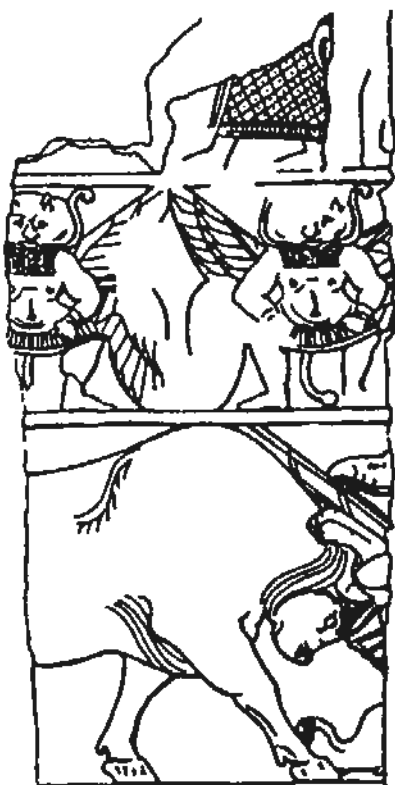


Fig. 3.52. Ivory; Megiddo; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 143b.

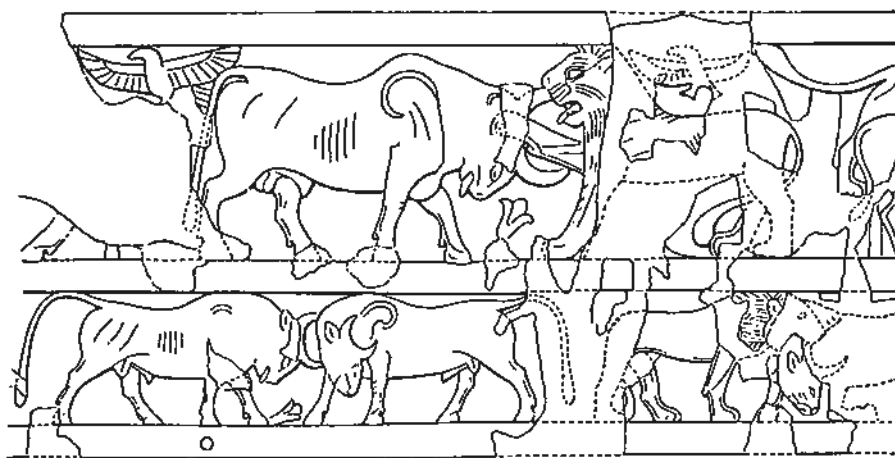


Fig. 3.53. Ivory; Lachish; IA I. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 164.

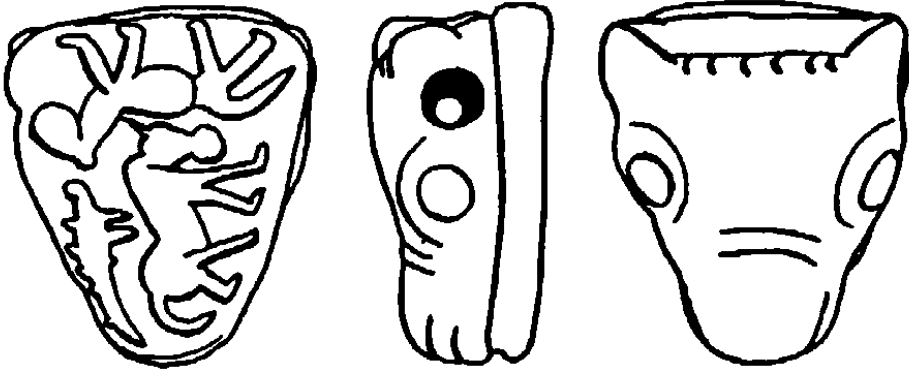


Fig. 3.54. Hematite seal; Tell el-Farḥah (S.); IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 169a.



Fig. 3.55. Steatite scarab; Tell Keisan; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 169b.

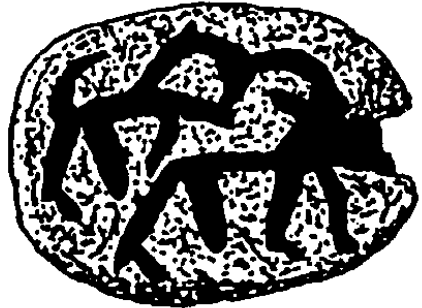


Fig. 3.56. Bone scarab; Tel Masos; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 145b.



Fig. 3.57. Scarab; Ashdod; late IA I-early IA II (ca. 1050-900). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 687 Nr. 67.



Fig. 3.58. Scarab; Megiddo; IA I (late 13th-early 11th c.). After Keel, *Studien IV*, Taf. 9,17.



Fig. 3.59. Rectangular plate seal; Akko; IA I (ca. 1130-945). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 573 Nr. 121.



Fig. 3.60. Scarab; Beersheba (Stratum VII); IA I (ca. 1050-950). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 346 Abb. 21.

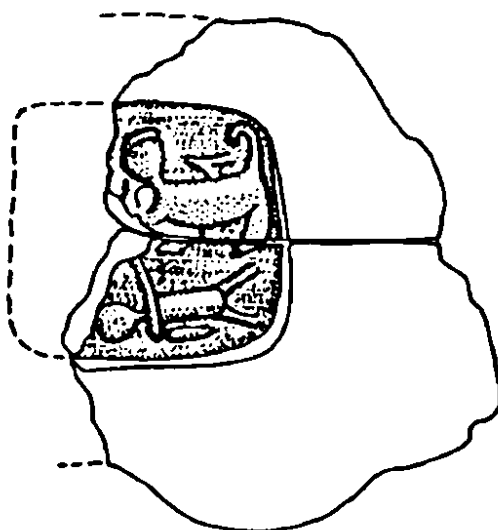


Fig. 3.61. Bulla; Tell Keisan (Locus 635, niv. 9a); IA I. After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 246 no. 30.



Fig. 3.62. Scarab; Megiddo; IA I (12th or 11th c.). After Keel, *Studien IV*, Taf. 10,21.

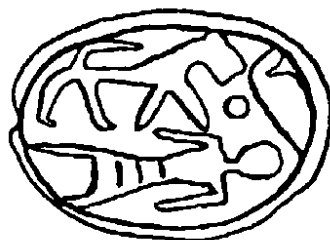


Fig. 3.63. Scarab; Tel Rekeš; surface find, probably IA I. After Keel, *Studien IV*, 51 Nr. 8.



Fig. 3.64. Scarab; Aseka; late LBA-mid IA II (ca. 1292-716). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 745 Nr. 26.



Fig. 3.65. Scarab; Megiddo; IA I (late 13th-early 11th c.). After Keel, *Studien IV*, Taf. 9,16.

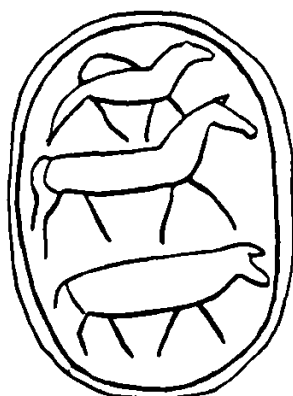


Fig. 3.66. Scarab; Ashdod; LBA-IA I (ca. 1292-1075). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 665 Nr. 9.



Fig. 3.67. Scarab; Tell el-Farḥah (S.); IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 147a.



Fig. 3.68. Scarab; Tell el-Farḥah (S.); IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 147b.



Fig. 3.69. Scarab; Akko; IA I (ca. 1130-945). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 561 Nr. 85.

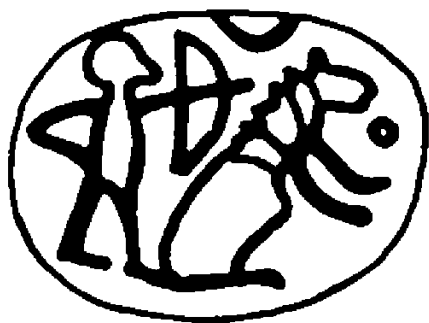


Fig. 3.70. Scarab; Akko; IA I (ca. 1130-945). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 563 Nr. 88.



Fig. 3.71. Scarab; Ashkelon; IA I (ca. 1250-1075). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 699 Nr. 25.



Fig. 3.72. Scarab; Tell el-ʿAjjul; IA I (ca. 1130-945). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 219 Nr. 345.



Fig. 3.73. Scarab; Akko; IA I (ca. 1130-945). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 563 Nr. 89.

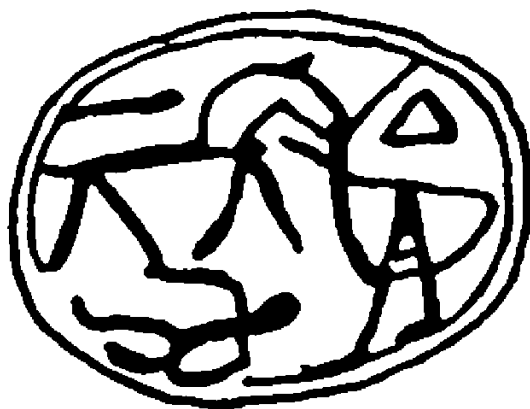


Fig. 3.74. Scarab; Akko; IA I (ca. 1130-945). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 613 Nr. 233.



Fig. 3.75. Rhyton; Tell Qasile (Stratum XI); IA I. After Weippert, *Palästina in vorhellenistischer Zeit*, Abb. 4.10.

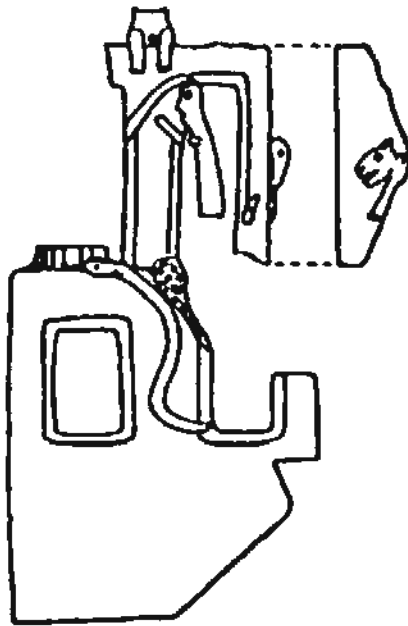


Fig. 3.76. Cult stand; Beth-Shean; IA I (12th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 105.

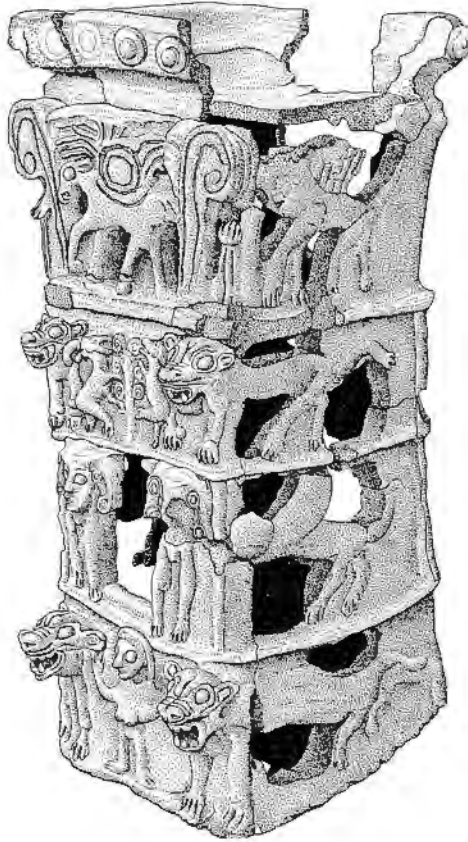


Fig. 3.77. Cult stand (A); Taanach; IA I. After Galling, ed., *Biblisches Reallexikon*, 191; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 184.

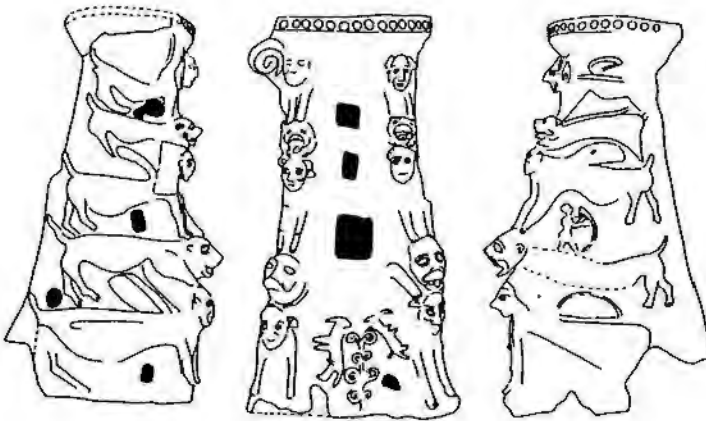


Fig. 3.78. Cult stand (B); Taanach; IA I. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 182a.



Fig. 3.79. Jug; Megiddo; IA I. After Weippert, *Palästina in vorhellenistischer Zeit*, Abb. 4.6.

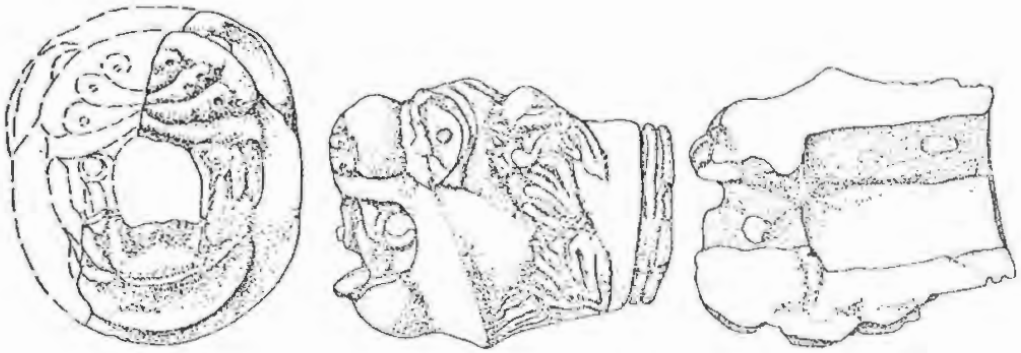


Fig. 3.80. Ivory; Tel Masos; IA I. After Crüsemann, "Der Löwenkopf von el-Masos," Abb. 1.

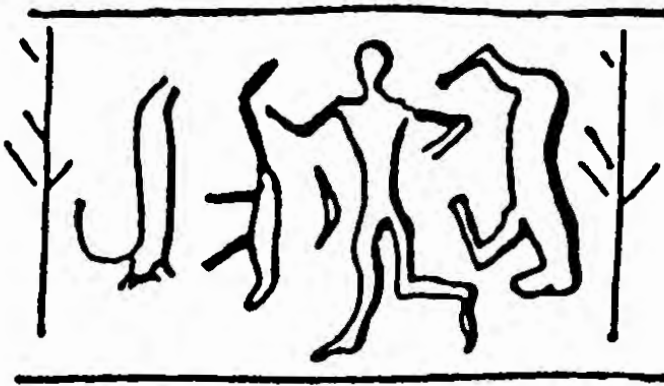


Fig. 3.81. Cylinder seal; Hazor; IA II. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 197c.

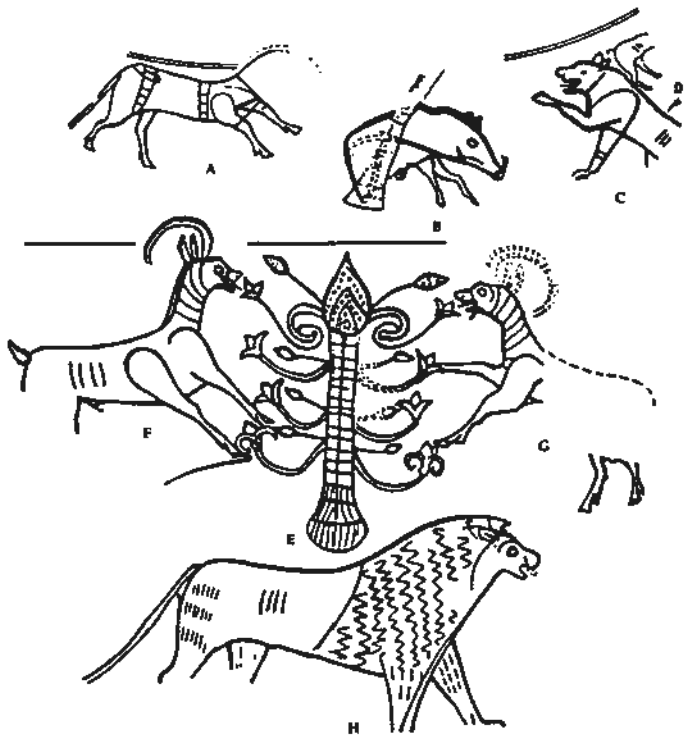


Fig. 3.82. Pithos (A); Kuntillet Ajrud; IA II (early 8th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 219.



Fig. 3.83. Pithos (B); Kuntillet Ajrud; IA II (early 8th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 221.



Fig. 3.84. Electron pendant; Tel Miqne-Ekron (Stratum IB); IA II. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole*, 554 Abb. 398; cf. King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 350 illus. 219.



Fig. 3.85. Chalcedony scaraboid (Hebrew); unprovenanced but probably IA II (ca. 700). After Ornan, "The Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals," 61 fig. 22; cf. CWSSS #173; Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 331b.



Fig. 3.86. Carnelian scaraboid (Hebrew) of *lzl* son of *ts* (לעזא בן חתס); unprovenanced (IA II?). After Sass, "The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals," 211 fig. 72; cf. CWSSS #298.

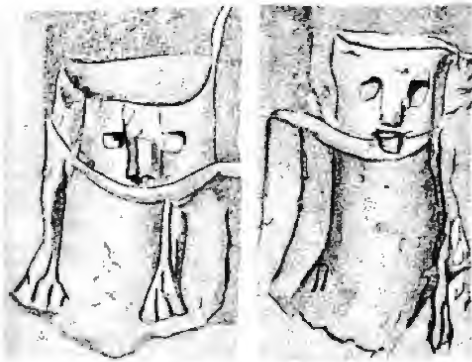


Fig. 3.87. Carving; Tel Eitun; IA II (9th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 202.

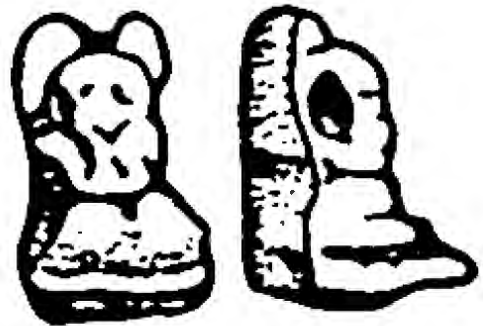


Fig. 3.88. Amulet; Beth-Shemesh (Grave 1); IA II. After Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, Abb. 799.



Fig. 3.89. Amulet; Tell el-Farḥah (S.) (Cemetery 100; Grave 133); IA II. After Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, Abb. 800.

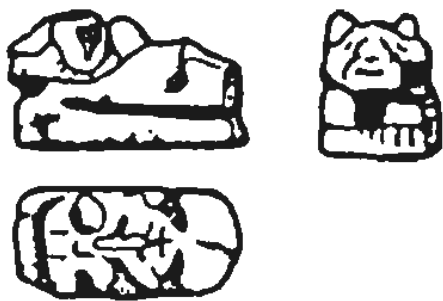


Fig. 3.90. Amulet; Lachish (Grave 218); late IA I-early IA II (ca. 950-850). After Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, Abb. 782.

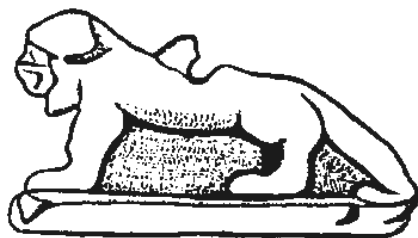
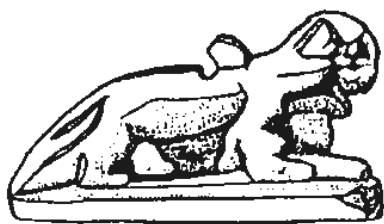


Fig. 3.91. Amulet; Samaria (Area Qb [Roman]); probably IA II. After Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette*, Abb. 798.

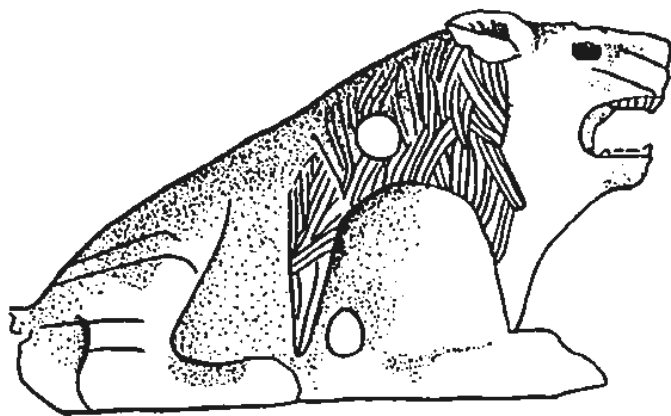


Fig. 3.92. Ivory; Samaria; IA II (9th or 8th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 204.



Fig. 3.93. Bulla; Samaria; IA II (probably 8th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 278b.



Fig. 3.94. Seal (from *lmlk* jar); Ramat Ra'el; IA II. After Sass, "The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals," 223 fig. 111.



Fig. 3.95. Seal; Hazor (Area B; Stratum V A); IA II. After Yadin et al., *Hazor II*, Pl. CII.23.



Fig. 3.96. Seal of Shema, the servant of Jeroboam (לשמע עבד ירבעם); Megiddo; IA II (8th c.; but date debated; possibly IA I). After Sass, "The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals," 223 fig. 109.

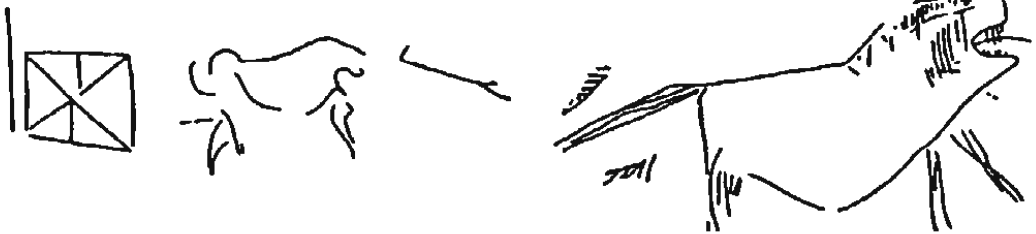


Fig. 3.97. Carving; Lachish; IA II (8th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 206b.



Fig. 3.98. Seal amulet; Lachish; IA II. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 268a.



Fig. 3.99. Seal amulet; Lachish; IA II. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 268b.

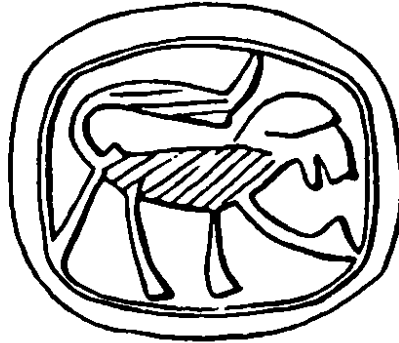


Fig. 3.100. Seal amulet; Megiddo; IA II. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 268c.

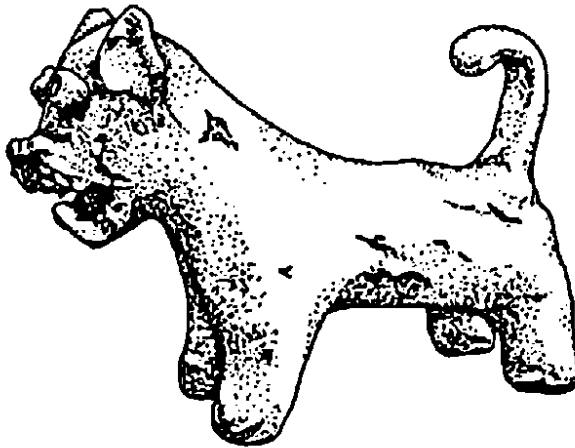


Fig. 3.101. Terra-cotta lion; Hebron; IA II (8th or 7th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 206a.

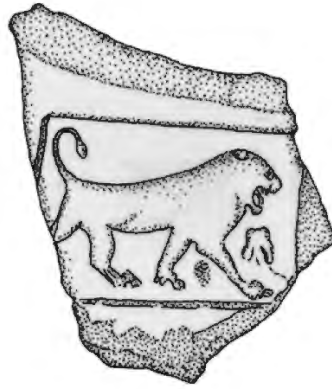


Fig. 3.102. Seal impression; Tel Dan (Area T); mixed late IA/Persian Period context (after 8th c.; perhaps 7th c.). Cf. Biran, Ilan, and Greenberg, *Dan I*, fig. 1.47.

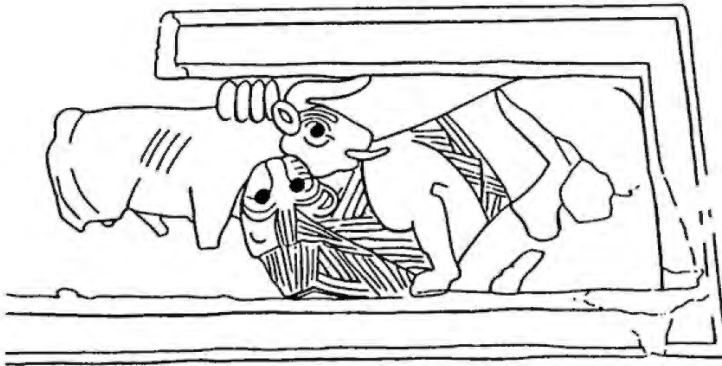


Fig. 3.103. Ivory; Samaria; IA II (9th or 8th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 203.



Fig. 3.104. Seal; Megiddo; IA II (8th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 231a.

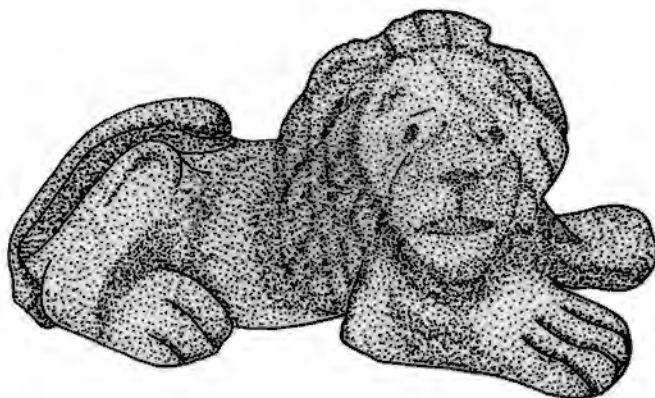


Fig. 3.105. Bronze figurine; Arad; IA II (9th c.). Cf. Aharoni, "The Israelite Sanctuary at Arad," 32 fig. 51.

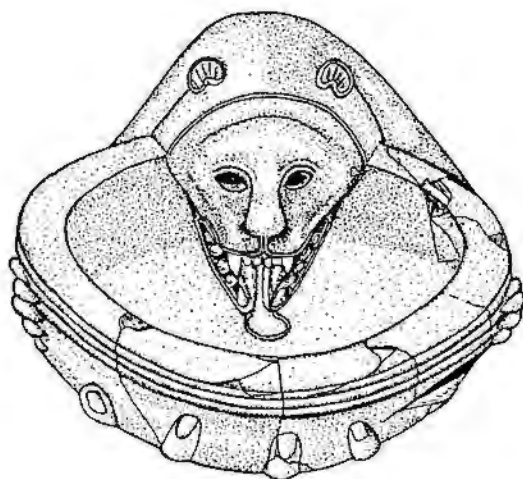


Fig. 3.106. Bowl; Tell el- Ḥ Oreimeh (Tel Kinrot/Kinneret) (Stratum I); IA II (last third of 8th c.). After Fritz, "Kinneret: Excavations at Tell El- Ḥ Oreimeh," 208 fig. 11.



Fig. 3.107. Molded lion-head; Tell Qasile; IA II. Cf. Maisler, *The Excavations at Tell Qasile*, Pl. 35.b.

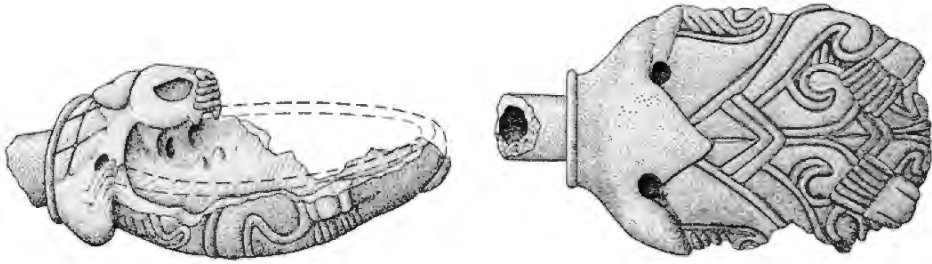


Fig. 3.108. Steatite incense spoon; Tell Beit Mirsim; IA II (9th c.). After Galling, ed., *Biblisches Reallexikon*, 192; cf. *ANEP* 592.



Fig. 3.109. Seal; ḥAtlit (Southeast cemetery; Grave 24); IA III/Persian Period (end of 6th–4th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 366a; cf. Keel, *Corpus I*, 767 Nr. 22.



Fig. 3.110. Seal; Ashkelon (surface find); IA III/Persian Period (6th–5th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 366b; cf. Keel, *Corpus I*, 691 Nr. 8.



Fig. 3.111. Scarab; Akko (surface find); late IA II/III (ca. 600–539) or Persian Period (ca. 539–332). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 575 Nr. 122.



Fig. 3.112. Scarab; ḥAtlit (Southeast cemetery; Grave 20); IA III/Persian Period (ca. 539–400). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 367a; cf. Keel, *Corpus I*, 759 Nr. 4.



Fig. 3.113. Scarab; Atlit (Southeast cemetery; Grave 23); IA III/Persian Period. After Keel, *Corpus I*, 765 Nr. 15.



Fig. 3.114. Scarab; Atlit (Southeast cemetery; Grave 23); IA III/Persian Period. After Keel, *Corpus I*, 765 Nr. 16.

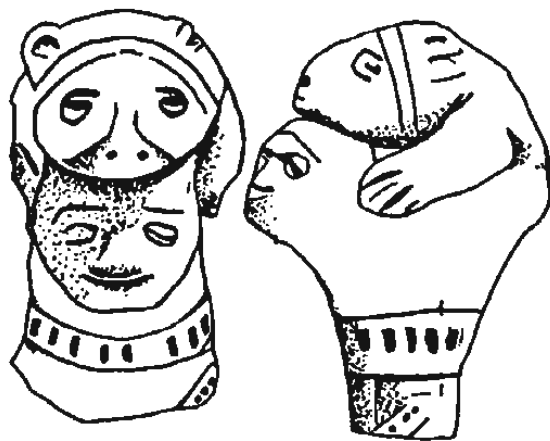


Fig. 3.115. Terra-cotta head; Lachish; IA III/Persian Period. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 368.

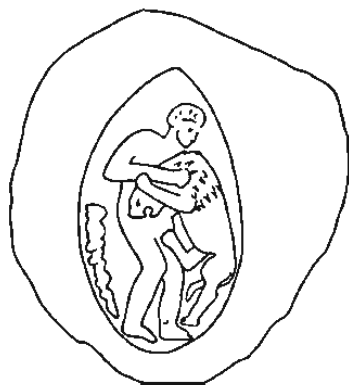


Fig. 3.116. Bulla; Wadi Daliyeh; IA III/Persian Period (4th c.). After Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. VI (WD 42).



Fig. 3.117. Bulla; Wadi Daliyeh; Hellenistic. After Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. VI (WD 39).

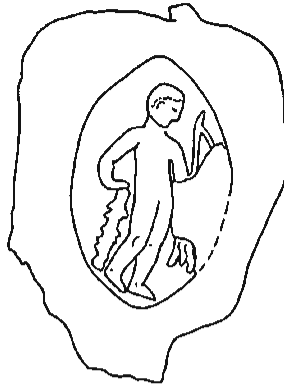


Fig. 3.118. Bulla; Wadi Daliyeh; IA III/Persian Period (4th c.). After Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. VI (WD 11C).



Fig. 3.119. Incense altar/box; Gezer; IA III/Persian Period (but date debated). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 372.

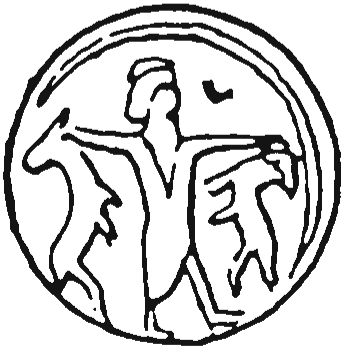


Fig. 3.120. Seal; Samaria; IA III/Persian Period. After Uehlinger, "Powerful Persianisms," 144 no. 3.



Fig. 3.121. Seal; Jericho; IA III/Persian Period. After Uehlinger, "Powerful Persianisms," 144 no. 4.



Fig. 3.122. Bulla; Wadi Daliyeh; IA III/Persian Period. After Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. XVII.1 (WD 17).



Fig. 3.123. Seal; Wadi Daliyeh; IA III/Persian Period. After Uehlinger, "Powerful Persianisms," 144 no. 7 (WD 36).



Fig. 3.124. Bulla; Wadi Daliyeh; IA III/Persian Period. After Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. XVII (WD 51).



Fig. 3.125. Bulla; Wadi Daliyeh; IA III/Persian Period (4th c.). After Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. XII (WD 47).

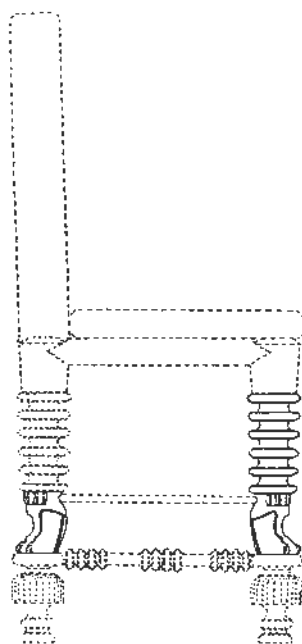


Fig. 3.126. Throne; Samaria; IA III/Persian Period. After Tadmor, "Fragments of an Achaemenid Throne," 43 fig. 1.



Fig. 3.127. Seal; Gibeon; IA III/Persian Period (6th-5th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 381a.



Fig. 3.128. Seals; Ramat Ra'el; IA III/Persian Period (6th-5th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 381b-c.



Fig. 3.129. Seal; Ramat Ra'el; IA III/Persian Period (6th-5th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 380a.



Fig. 3.130. Seal; Ramat Ra'el; IA III/Persian Period (6th-5th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 380b.



Fig. 3.131. Seal; Ein-Gedi; IA III/Persian Period. After Stern, "Seal-Impressions in the Achaemenid Style," 9 fig. 4.



Fig. 3.132. Seal; Ramat Ra^{el}; IA III/Persian Period (6th-5th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 382a.



Fig. 3.133. Seal; Ramat Ra^{el}; IA III/Persian Period (6th-5th c.). After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 382b.

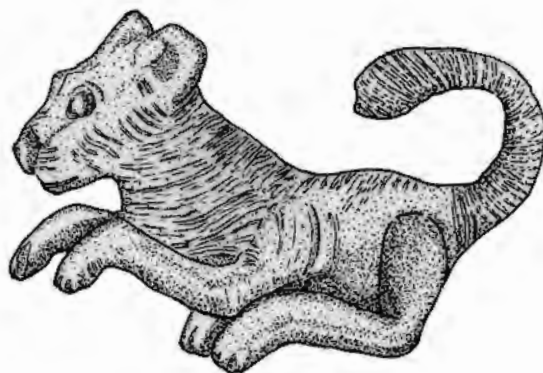


Fig. 3.134. Bronze; Mi^{pe} Yamim; IA III/Persian Period. Cf. Frankel and Ventura, "The Mi^{pe} Yamim Bronzes," 53 figs. 22-25.

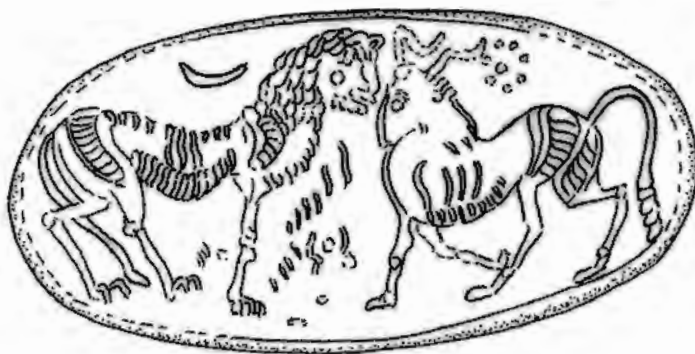


Fig. 3.135. Gold ring; Gibeon; IA III/Persian Period. Cf. Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible*, 199 fig. 322.

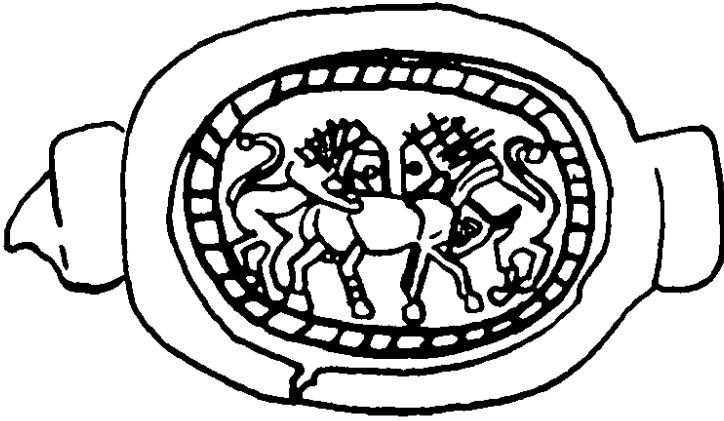


Fig. 3.136. Scarab; Tell Abu Hawam (Stratum II); IA III/Persian Period (6th-5th c.). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 13 Nr. 19.

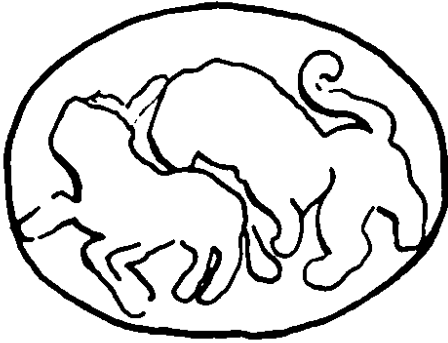


Fig. 3.137. Scarab; Akko (surface find); IA III/Persian Period (ca. 539-333). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 635 Nr. 294.

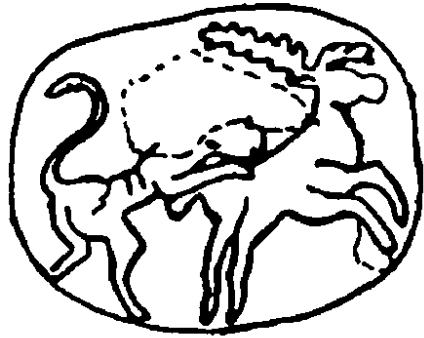


Fig. 3.138. Scaraboid; Ashkelon (Grid 57; Square 68); late IA II-early IA III/Persian Period (ca. 650-500). After Keel, *Corpus I*, 715 Nr. 67.

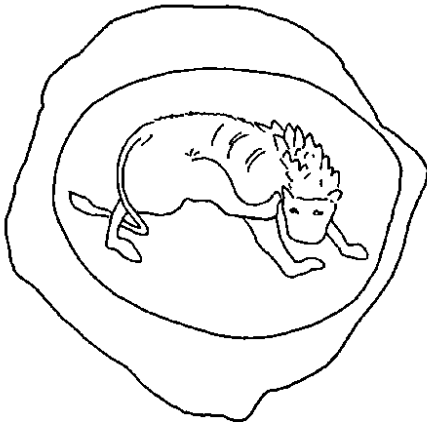


Fig. 3.139. Bulla; Wadi Daliyeh; IA III/Persian Period. After Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. XIII (WD 55).

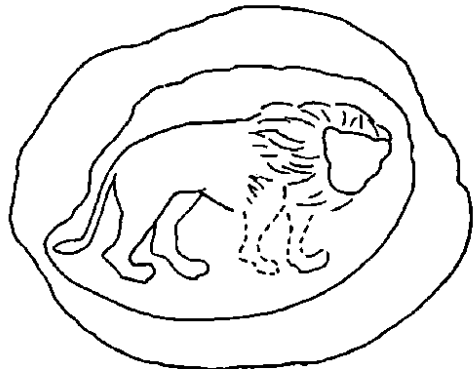


Fig. 3.140. Bulla; Wadi Daliyeh; IA III/Persian Period. After Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. XIII (WD 37).

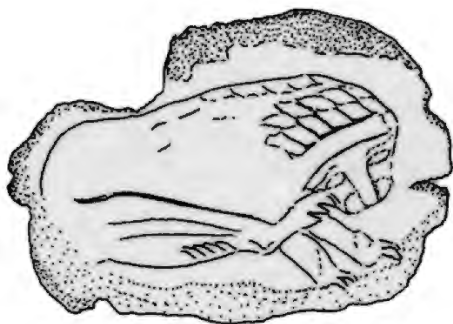


Fig. 3.141. Bulla; unprovenanced (Samaria?); IA III/Persian Period. Cf. Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. XXIII.11 (HM K63.N).

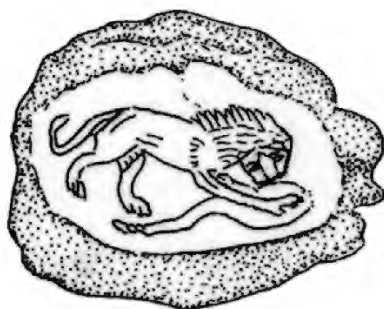


Fig. 3.142. Bulla; unprovenanced (Samaria?); IA III/Persian Period. Cf. Leith, *Wadi Daliyeh I*, Pl. XXIII.12 (IM 82.19.922).



Fig. 3.143. Coin; Samaria; IA III/Persian Period. After Uehlinger, "Powerful Persianisms," 181 fig. 12.



Fig. 3.144. Coin; Samaria; IA III/Persian Period. After Uehlinger, "Powerful Persianisms," 181 fig. 16.



Fig. 3.145. Lapis lazuli scaraboid of ḥbd (לעברד); unprovenanced. Cf. CWSSS #1160.

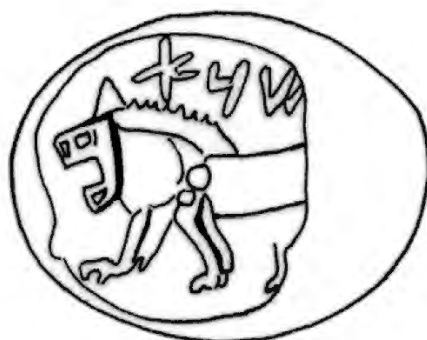


Fig. 3.146. Lapis lazuli scaraboid (Hebrew) of [לֵא שֵׁנָא] שְׁרָ[β] (לֵא שֵׁנָא); unprovenanced (8th c.?). Cf. CWSSS #100.



Fig. 3.147. Carnelian (?) scaraboid of *nḥn* (נחנן); unprovenanced. Cf. CWSSS #1141.



Fig. 3.148. Onyx scaraboid of *gdr̄m* (?); unprovenanced. After CWSSS #1135.



Fig. 3.149. Chalcedony scaraboid of *nry* (נרי); unprovenanced (8th c.?). Cf. CWSSS #1156.



Fig. 3.150. Agate scaraboid of *ḥšnāl* (עשנאל); unprovenanced (8th c.?). Cf. Sass, "The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals," 215 fig. 84; CWSSS #1169; Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 205c.

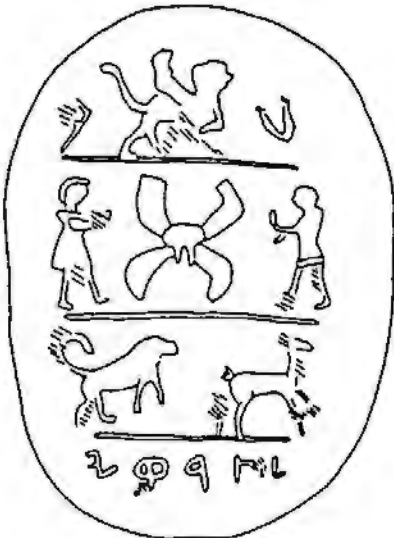


Fig. 3.151. Jasper scaraboid of *ḏqy* (לצדקי); unprovenanced. After Lemaire, "Les critères non-iconographiques," 23 fig. 5; cf. CWSSS #1171.



Fig. 3.152. Limestone scaraboid of *šl* (לשאל); unprovenanced (8th c.?). Cf. CWSSS #1175; Lemaire, "Les critères non-iconographiques," 23 fig. 2.



Fig. 3.153. Limestone scaraboid of *lsh* (לאשה); unprovenanced (8th c.?). Cf. CWSSS #1129.



Fig. 3.154. Carnelian scarab of *l* (לא) [or “belonging to *l*”]; unprovenanced (8th c.?). Cf. CWSSS #1145.



Fig. 3.155. Agate scaraboid of *h* (עלה); unprovenanced (8th c.?). After Keel-Leu, *Vorderasiatische Stempelsiegel*, Nr. 127; cf. CWSSS #1168.



Fig. 3.156. Limestone scaraboid (Hebrew) of *tnl* (לתנאל); unprovenanced (8th c.?). Cf. CWSSS #391.

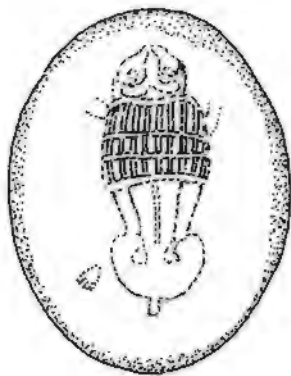


Fig. 3.157. Stone scaraboid (Hebrew) of *mnr* (למנר); unprovenanced. Cf. CWSSS #243.

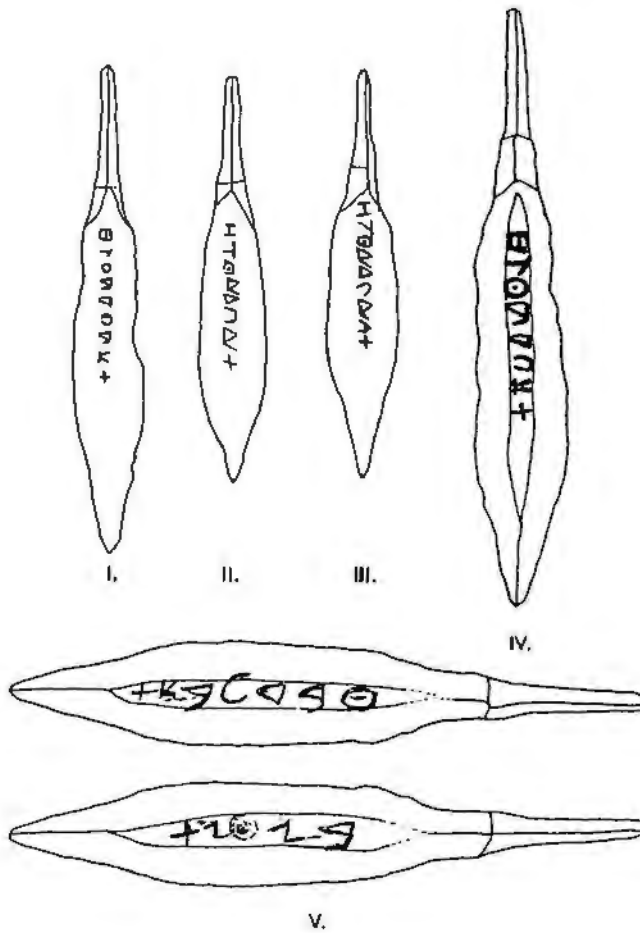


Fig. 3.158. Arrowheads; el-Khadr; 12th or 11th c. After Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, fig. 32.



Fig. 3.159. Agate scaraboid (Hebrew or Moabite) of *kpr* (כפר); unprovenanced (7th c.?). After Ornan, "The Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals," 69 fig. 69; cf. CWSSS #1079.



Fig. 3.160. Hematite cone (Hebrew) of *bsl* son of *bsl* (בשל בן בשל); unprovenanced. Cf. CWSSS #48.



Fig. 4.1. Stela; Uruk/Warka (Level III; but not *in situ*); ca. 3000. After Börker-Klähn, *Alt Vorderasiatische Bildstelen*, Nr. 1a; cf. *ANEP*, 182.

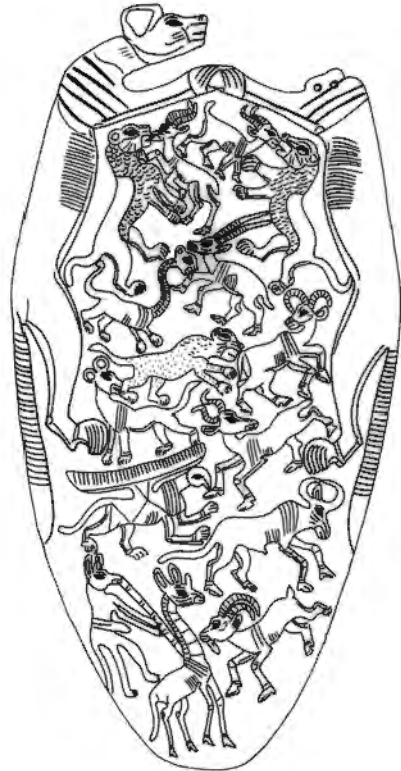


Fig. 4.2. Two Dog Palette; Hierakonpolis; Predynastic Period (ca. 3200). Cf. Goldwasser, *From Icon to Metaphor*, fig. 3.

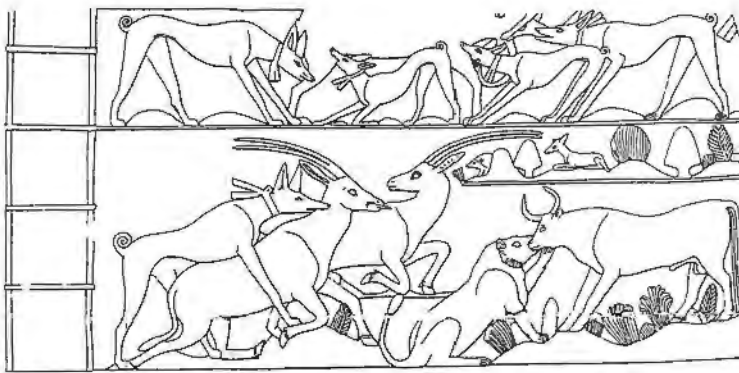


Fig. 4.3. Wall painting; tomb of Mereruka; Old Kingdom. After Marinatos, “Some Reflections on the Rhetoric of Aegean and Egyptian Art,” 78 fig. 25.

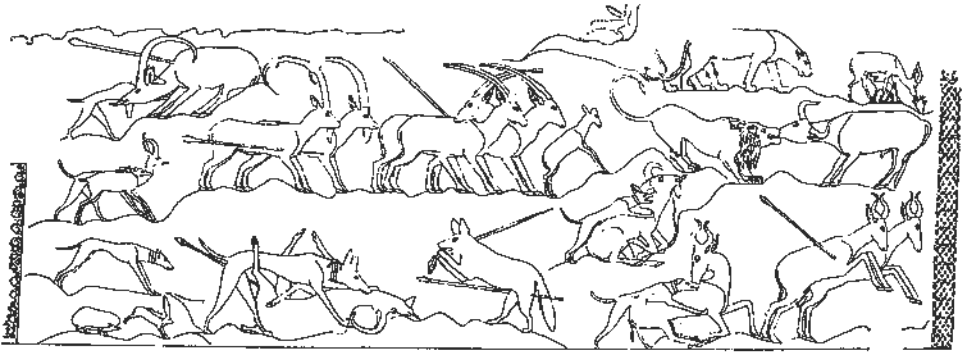


Fig. 4.4. Wall painting; Meir (Tomb of Senbi); Dynasty 12. After Smith, *Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, fig. 187.

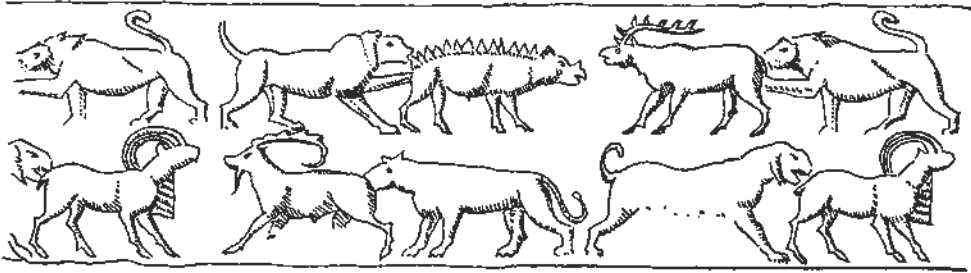


Fig. 4.5. Cylinder seal; Protoliterate Period (Uruk VI-IV). After Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, Pl. L 4.



Fig. 4.6. Cylinder seal; Early Dynastic III. After Keel, *Das Böcklein in der Milch*, Abb. 61.

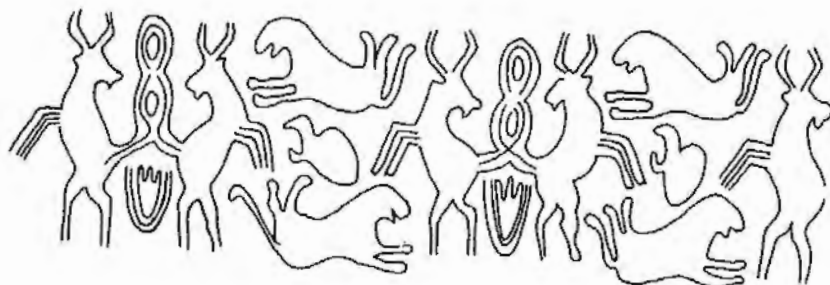


Fig. 4.7. Seal; Habuba Kabira South; ca. 3500-3000. After Weiss, ed., *Ebla to Damascus*, fig. 30.

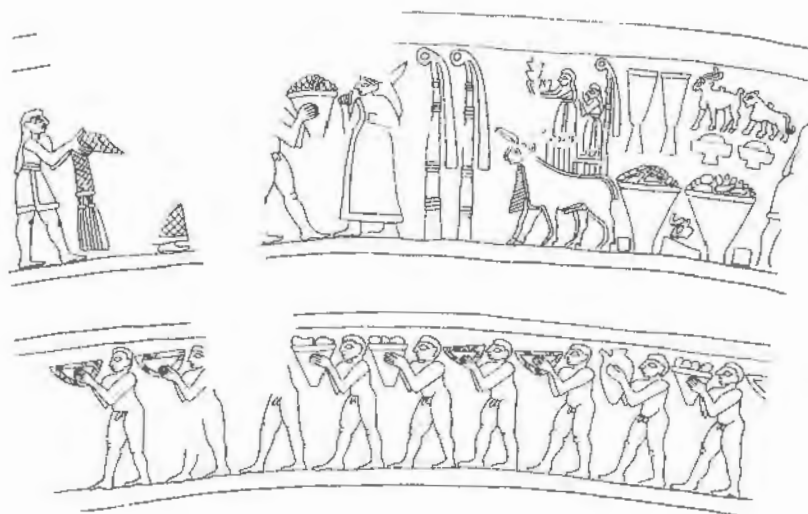


Fig. 4.8. Stone vase (detail); Uruk/Warka; Late Uruk Period (ca. 3500-3100). After Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, fig. 122.

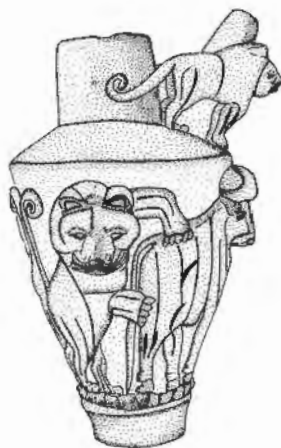


Fig. 4.9. Yellow sandstone vase; Uruk/Warka; early 3rd millennium. Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, fig. 16.

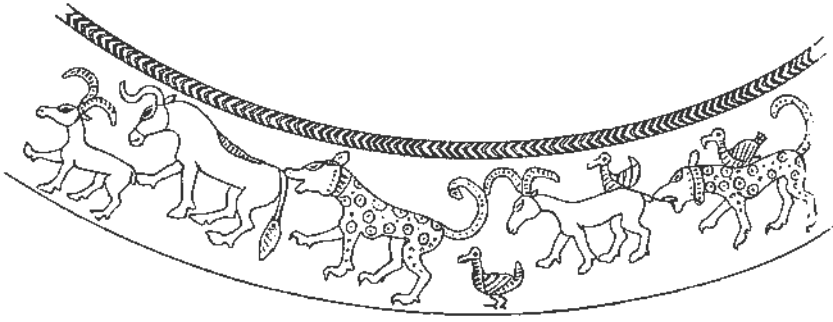


Fig. 4.10. Design on engraved vase; Maikop (Chieftain's tomb); 4th millennium. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 240.

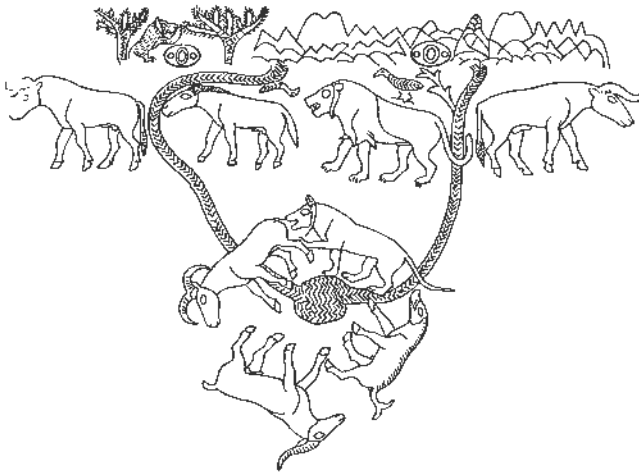


Fig. 4.11. Design on engraved vase; Maikop (Chieftain's tomb); 4th millennium. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 243.



Fig. 4.12. Decorated steatite bowl; Khafaje; 3rd millennium (29th-28th c.). Cf. Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, 33 fig. 12.



Fig. 4.13. Plaque; Lagash (Telloh); ca. 2500. Cf. Speiser, *Vorderasiatische Kunst*, Taf. 81 Links.

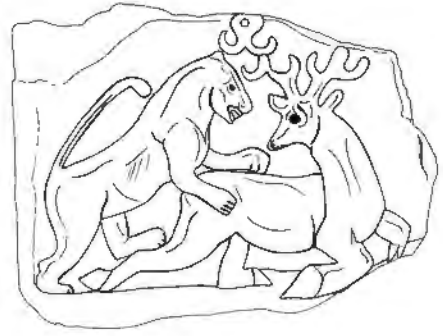


Fig. 4.14. Limestone bas-relief; Kish; first half of 3rd millennium. Cf. Parrot, *Sumer*, fig. 162.

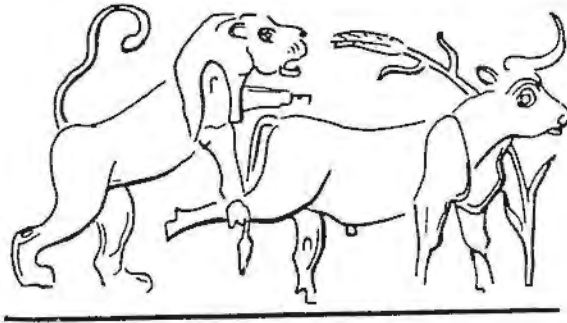


Fig. 4.15. Seal impression; Jemdet-Nasr Period. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 11.

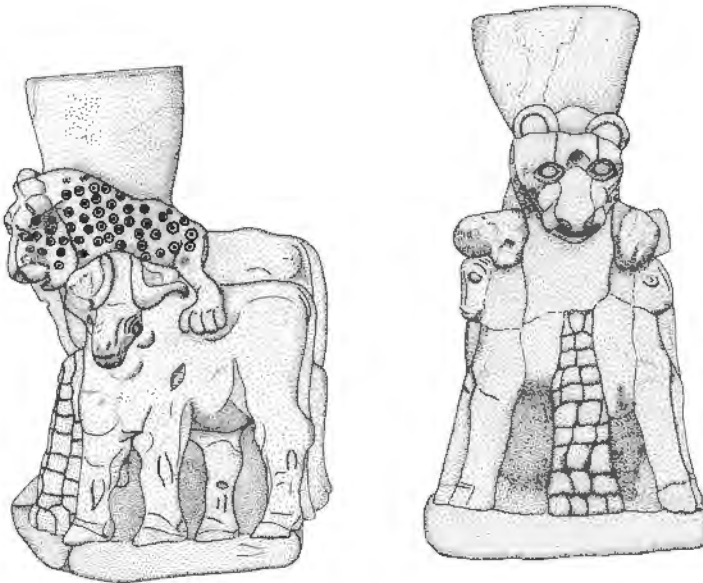


Fig. 4.16. Steatite cult vessel; Uruk IV Period. Cf. Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, Pls. 15-16.

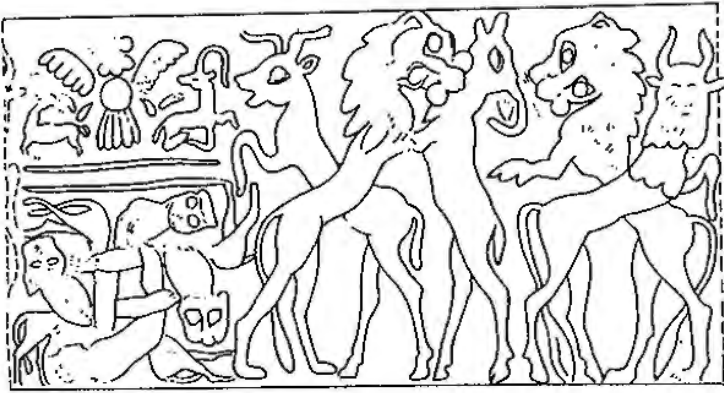


Fig. 4.17. Seal impression; Fara; Early Dynastic III. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 87A.

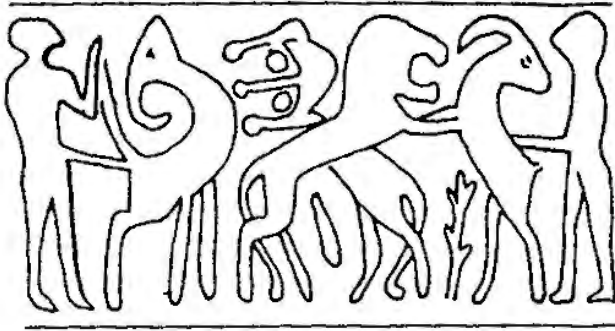


Fig. 4.18. Seal impression on bulla; Syria; Early Dynastic Period. After Collon, *First Impressions*, no. 947.

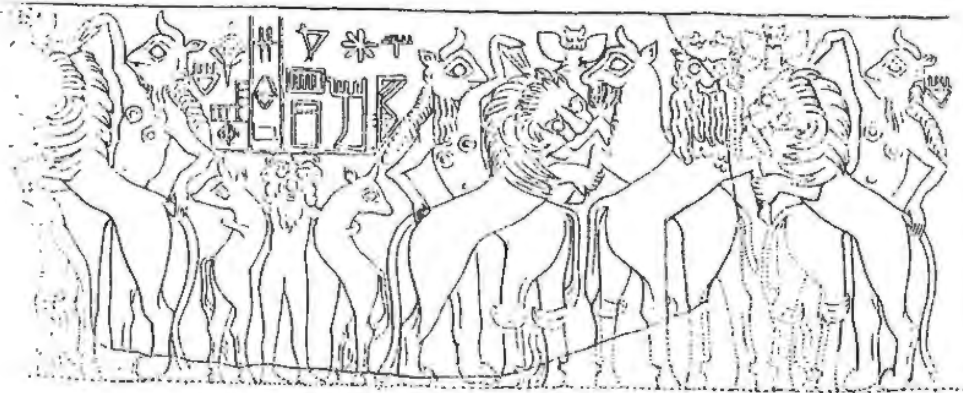


Fig. 4.19. Seal impression; Tello, Early Dynastic Period. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 6.

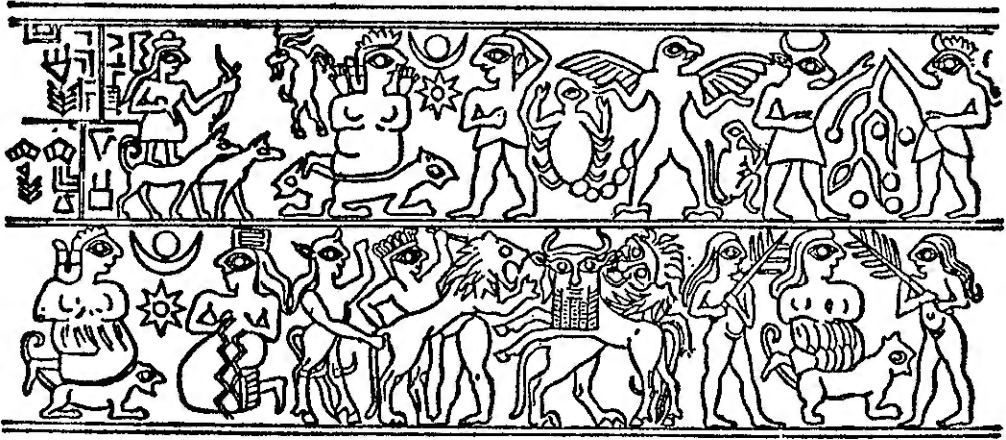


Fig. 4.20. Seal impression; Susa; Early Dynastic Period. After Keel, *Deine Blicke sind Tauben*, Abb. 14.

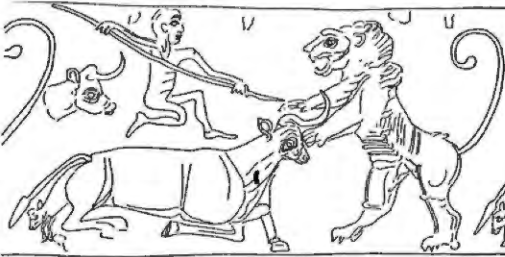


Fig. 4.21. Seal; Early Dynastic Period. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 12.

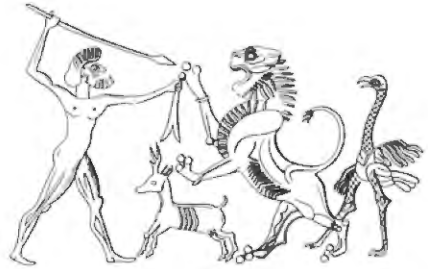


Fig. 4.22. Seal; Middle Assyrian Period. Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 159.



Fig. 4.23. Seal impression; Tell Agrab; Early Dynastic II. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 83A.



Fig. 4.24. Cylinder seal; Akkadian Period. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 59.



Fig. 4.25. Hematitis cylinder seal; MBA. After Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals*, 56 fig. 35.

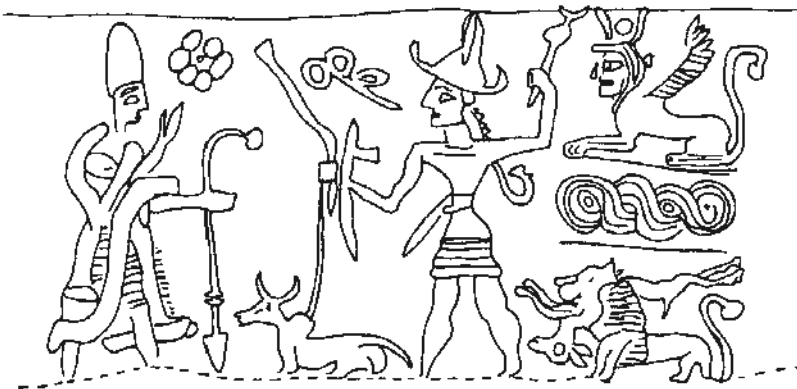


Fig. 4.26. Hematitis cylinder seal; MBA. After Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals*, 81 fig. 141.



Fig. 4.27. Hematite cylinder seal; MBA. After Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals*, 58 fig. 43.

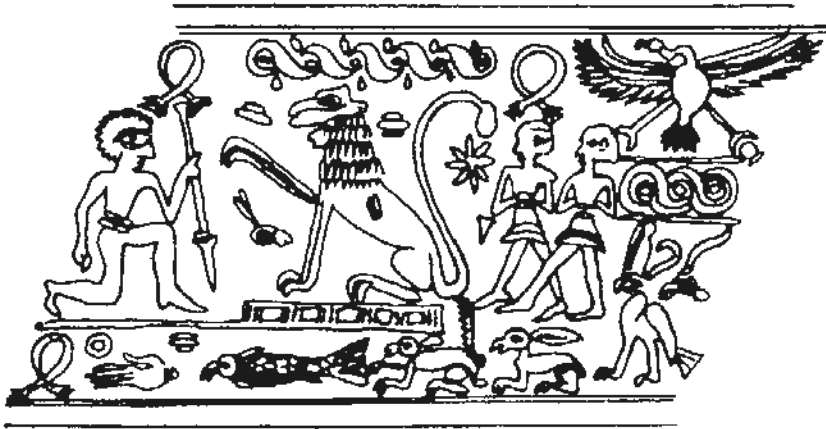


Fig. 4.28. Hematite cylinder seal; MBA. After Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals*, 96 fig. 178.



Fig. 4.29. Hematite cylinder seal; Ras Shamra/Ugarit; MBA. After Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals*, 96 fig. 182.

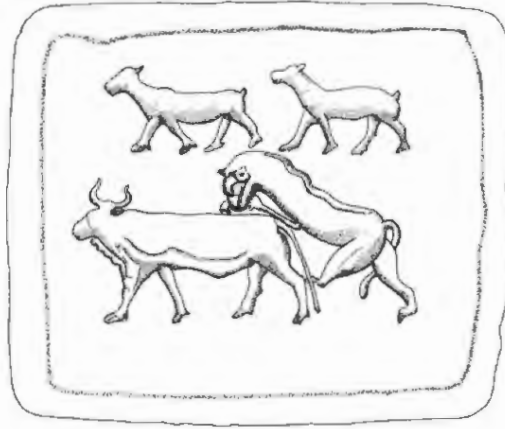


Fig. 4.30. Mould; Mari; 18th c. Cf. Parrot, *Sumer*, fig. 362.

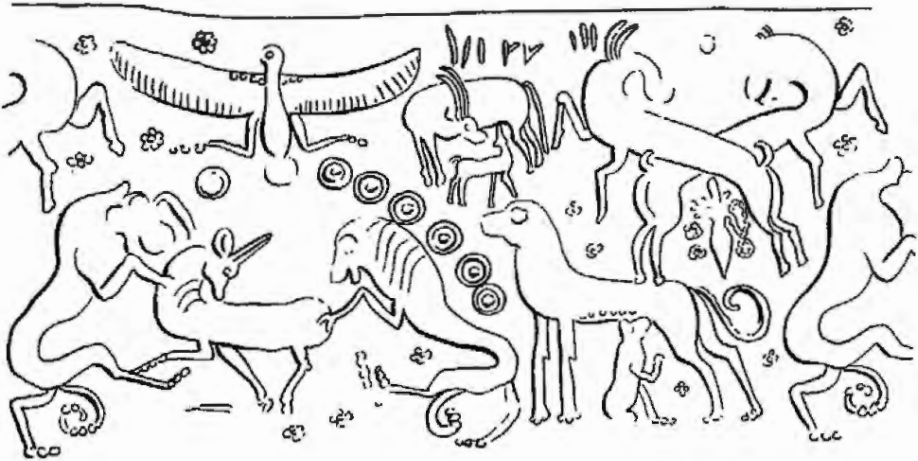


Fig. 4.31. Seal; Carchemish, LBA. After Keel, *Das Böcklein in der Milch*, Abb. 84.



Fig. 4.32. Seal; Middle Assyrian Period. After Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, Pl. O 6.



Fig. 4.33. Seal; Middle Assyrian Period. After Keel/Keel-Leu/Schroer, *Studien II*, 63 Abb. 40.



Fig. 4.34. Clay plaque; Babylon, Late Kassite Period (13th c.). Cf. Speiser, *Vorderasiatische Kunst*, Taf. 69.



Fig. 4.35. Gold bowl; Ugarit; first half of 14th c. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 296.

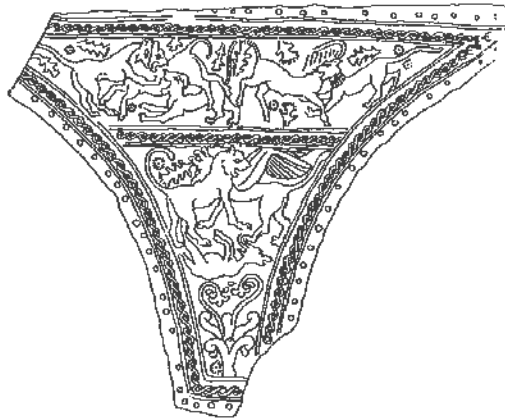


Fig. 4.36. Engraved bronze foil; Tyre; 14th-13th c. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 301.



Fig. 4.37. Silver and ivory plaque; IA (beginning of 1st millennium). Cf. Parrot, *Nineveh and Babylon*, fig. 331.



Fig. 4.38. Seal impression; Neo-Assyrian Period (7th c.). Cf. Speiser, *Vorderasiatische Kunst*, Taf. 104.



Fig. 4.39. Faience cylinder seal; Susa; Neo-Elamite (10th-9th c.). After Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, 54 fig. 29.

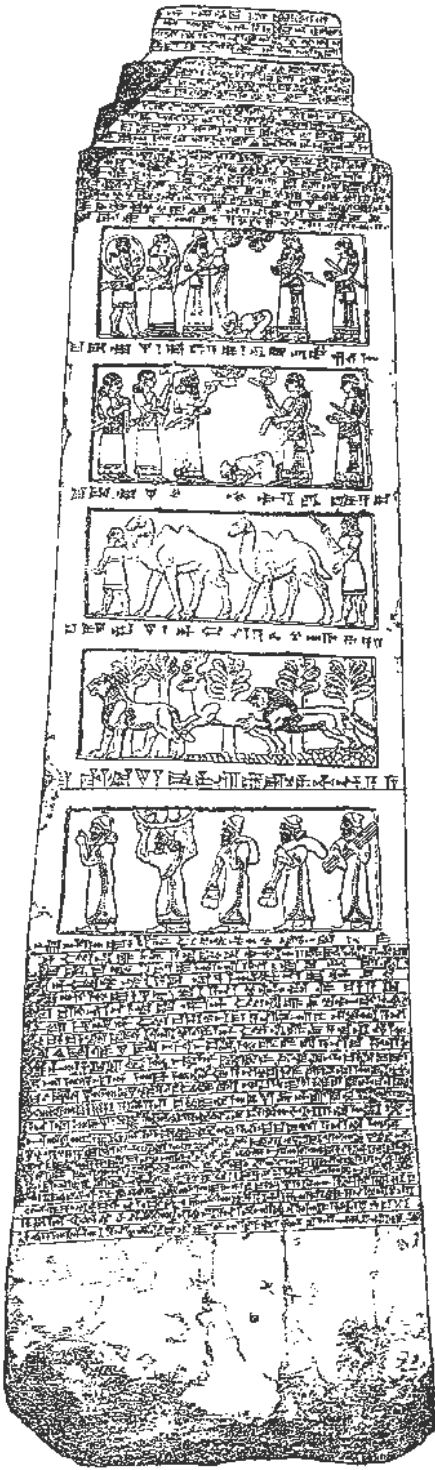


Fig. 4.40. Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (858-824). After ABAT2, Abb. 123.



Fig. 4.41. Basalt relief; Gozan; ca. 850. Cf. Speiser, *Vorderasiatische Kunst*, Taf. 81.

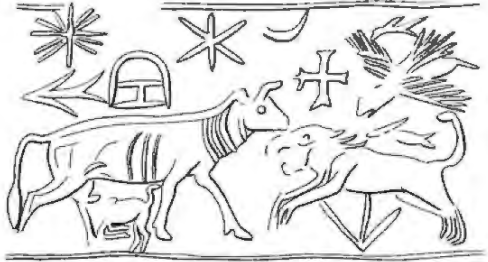


Fig. 4.42. Cylinder seal; 9th or 8th c. After Keel, *Das Böcklein in der Milch*, Abb. 106.



Fig. 4.43. Jasper scaraboid (underside) of Mena'em (למנחם); unprovenanced (9th-8th c.). After Lemaire, "Les critères non-iconographiques," 23 fig. 3; cf. CWSSS #1149.



Fig. 4.44. Jasper seal (Phoenician) of Manan(i?) blessed of Baal (?). חתם מנן ברך (?); unprovenanced (8th-7th c.). After CWSSS #721.



Fig. 4.45. Steatite scarab (Phoenician) of Bodba'al (לבדבעל); unprovenanced (8th c.). After Gubel, "The Iconography of Inscribed Phoenician Glyptic," 112 fig. 25; cf. CWSSS #726.



Fig. 4.46. Stone scaraboid of Miqn' (?). (למקן[?]); unprovenanced (late 9th-8th c.). After Lemaire, "Les critères non-iconographiques," 23 fig. 4; cf. CWSSS #1151.

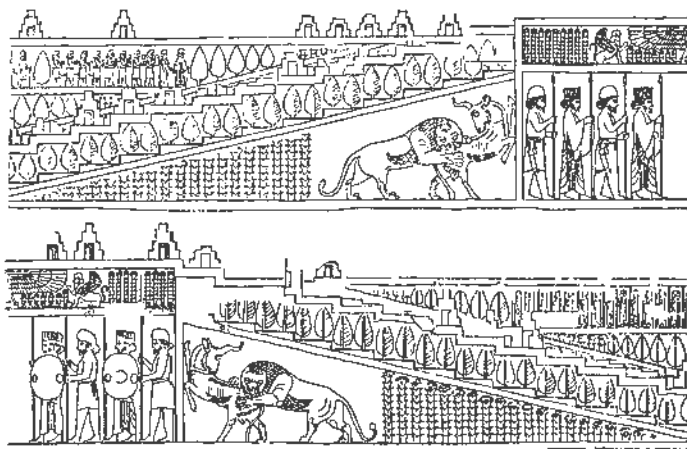


Fig. 4.47. Relief; Persepolis (Apadana); 5th c. After Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, fig. 83.

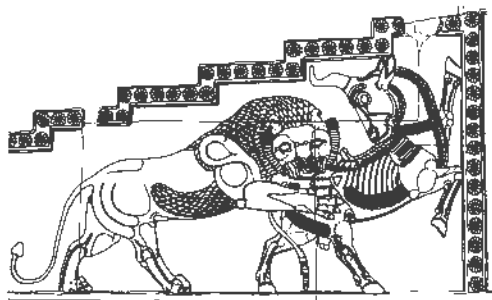


Fig. 4.48. Relief; Persepolis (Staircase to palace south of citadel); 5th c. Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, fig. 434.



Fig. 4.49. Seal; Syria; MBA. After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 191 Fig. 22; cf. Speiser, *Vorderasiatische Kunst*, Taf. 59.



Fig. 4.50. Seal impression; Aleppo group with Aegean elements; ca. 18th c. After Weiss, ed., *Ebla to Damascus*, fig. 23.

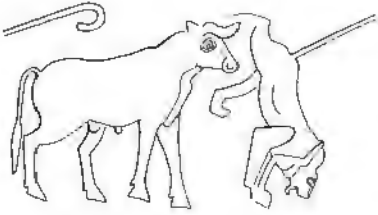


Fig. 4.51. Seal; Protoliterate Period. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 10.

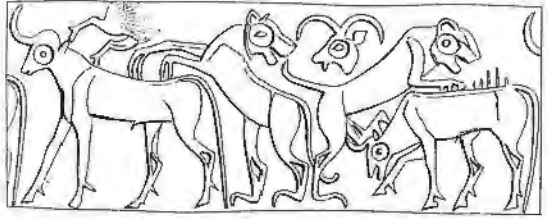


Fig. 4.52. Seal; Early Dynastic Period. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 16.



Fig. 4.53. Cylinder seal; ca. 1800. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 81.



Fig. 4.54. Cylinder seal; Neo-Assyrian (9th-8th c.). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 61.



Fig. 4.55. Chalcedony cylinder seal; Neo-Assyrian (9th-7th c.). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 60.



Fig. 4.56. Ivory; Nimrud; 8th c. After Rühlmann, “Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild,” Taf. VIIa.

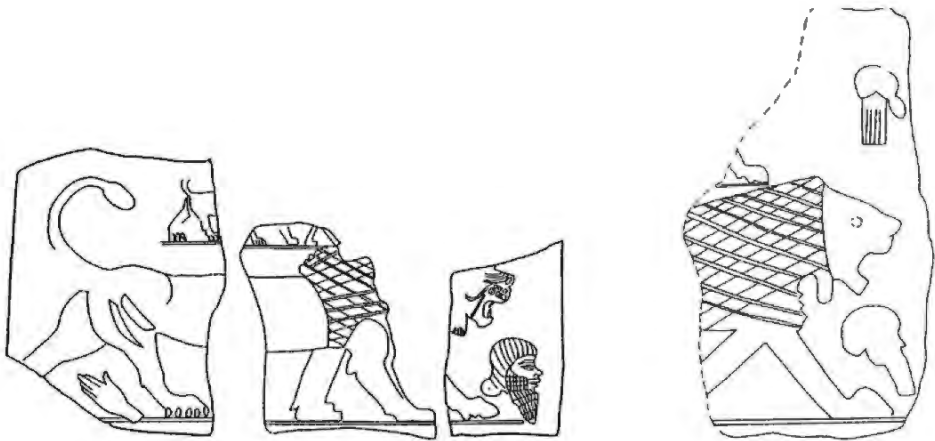


Fig. 4.57. Stamp seal; probably Nineveh; probably 7th c. After Strawn, “Psalm 22:17b: More Guessing,” 450 fig. 6.

Fig. 4.58. Stamp seal; probably Nineveh; probably 7th c. After Herbordt, *Neuassyrische Glyptik*, Taf. 19, no. 6.



Fig. 4.59. Seal with Aramaic inscription; mid-7th c. (?). Cf. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, 1:237.

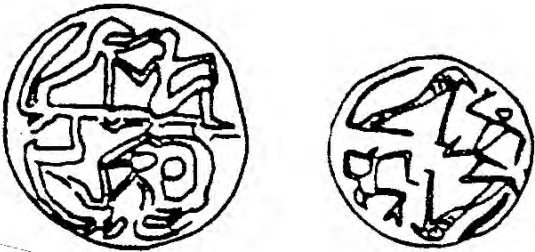


Fig. 4.60. Stamp seals; Old Kingdom. After Rühlmann, “Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild,” Taf. Ib.



Fig. 4.61. Stamp seal; Tanis; New Kingdom. After Rühlmann, "Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild," Taf. In.



Fig. 4.62. Sculpture; Deir el-Medineh; Ramesside. After Rühlmann, "Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild," Taf II d.



Fig. 4.63. Sandstone relief; Muḥawarât eḥ-fofra (lion temple); early Ptolemaic Period (3rd c.). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 101.



Fig. 4.64. Ceramic object; Tell Asmar; Isin-Larsa Period. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 106.

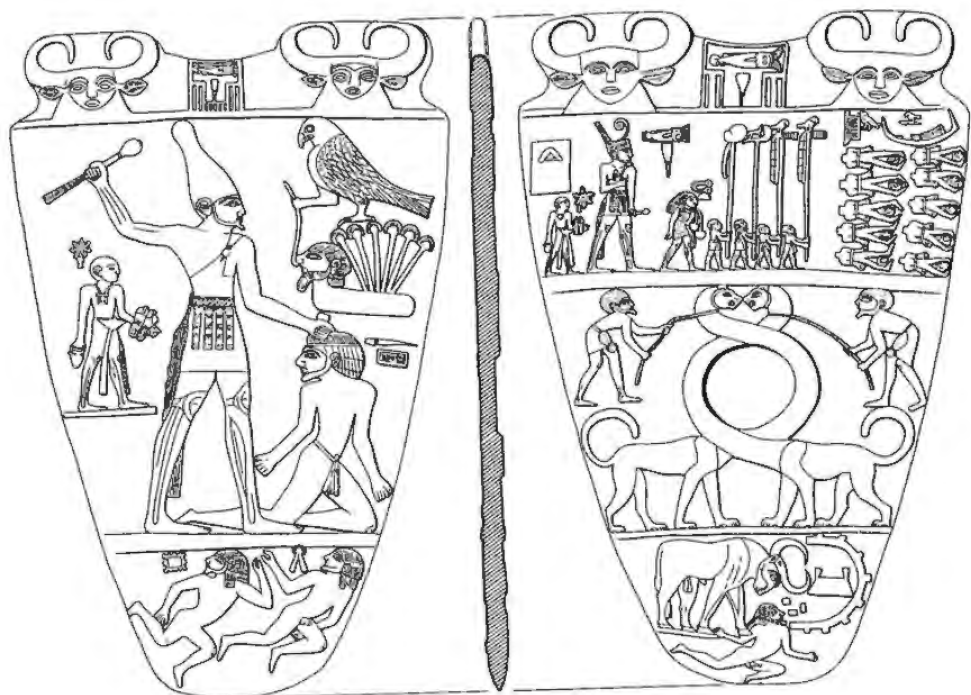


Fig. 4.65. Narmer Palette; Hierakonpolis; ca. 3000. After Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, fig. 12.

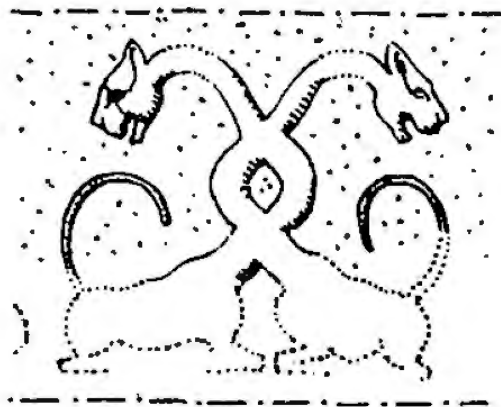


Fig. 4.66. Cylinder seal impression; Protoliterate Period. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 25B.

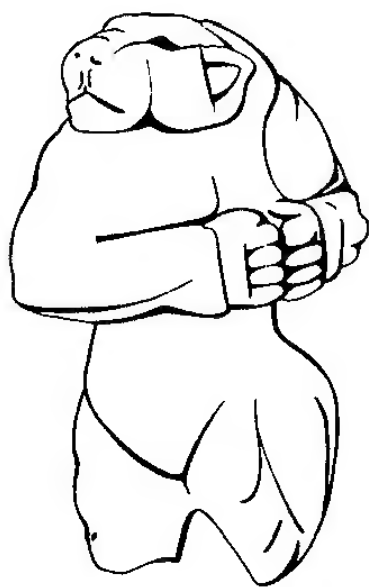


Fig. 4.67. Limestone figurine; Susa (?); Protoliterate Period. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 98.

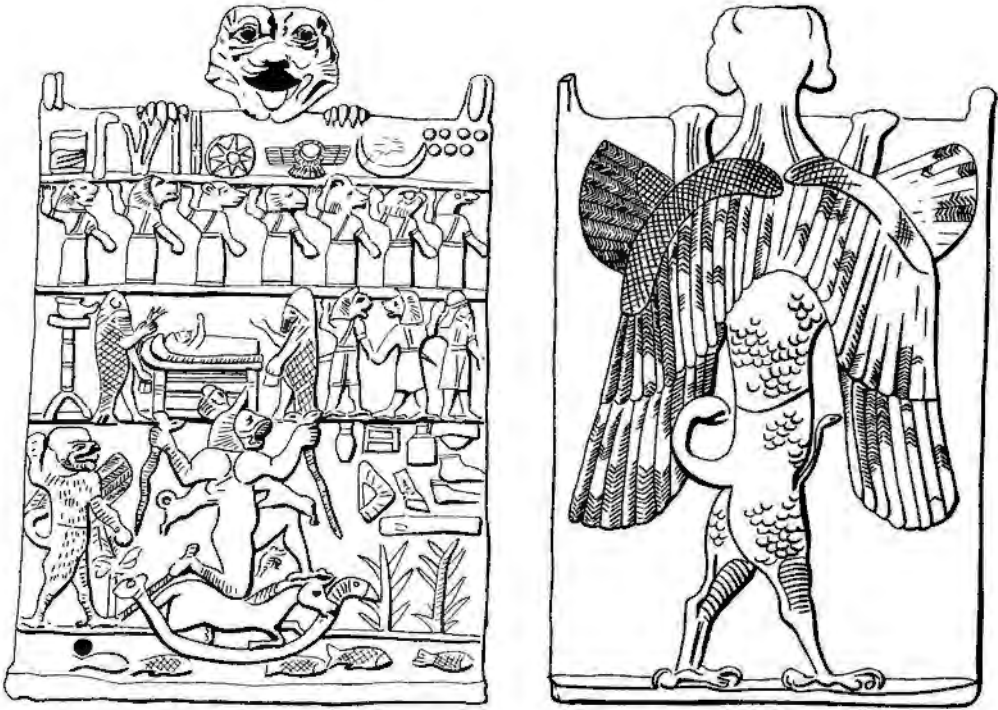


Fig. 4.68. Bronze Lamaštu plaque; IA (beginning of 1st millennium). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, figs. 91-92.



Fig. 4.69. Bronze bell; ca. 700. Cf. *ANEP*, 665.

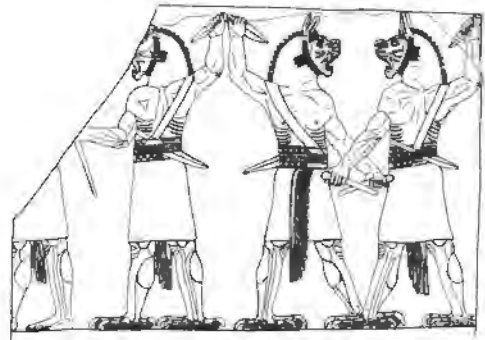


Fig. 4.70. Stone relief (same as **fig. 4.74**); Nineveh (Palace of Ashurbanipal); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, fig. 99.

I

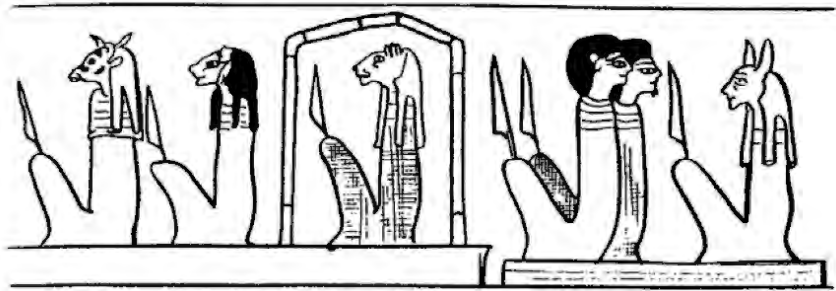


Fig. 4.71. Illustration on Papyrus of Hunefer; Seti I (1294-1279). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 95.

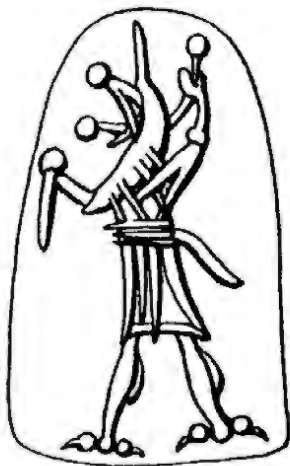


Fig. 4.72. Chalcedony conoid seal (Aramaic) of *lbya* (אֲבִיחַ); unprovenanced. After Ornan, “Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals,” 57 fig. 14; cf. CWSSS #758 (side).



Fig. 4.73. Carnelian conoid seal (Aramaic) of *šlxl šp* (לְשֹׁאֵל/לְשֹׁאֵל); unprovenanced (7th c.?). After Ornan, “The Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals,” 57 fig. 13; cf. CWSSS #845 (side A).

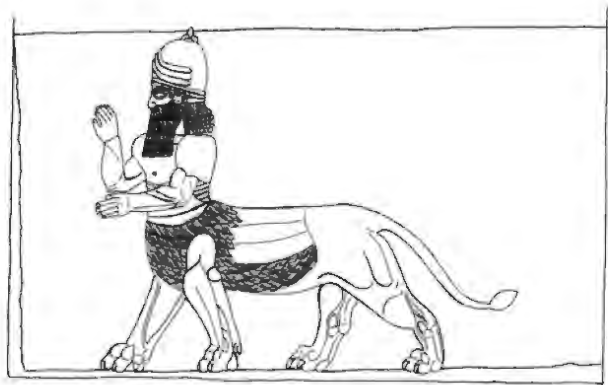


Fig. 4.74. Stone relief (same as **fig. 4.70**); Nineveh (Palace of Ashurbanipal); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, fig. 99 (note also fig. 53).



Fig. 4.75. Cylinder seal; Middle Assyrian. After Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, fig. 98.



Fig. 4.76. Drawing of stone relief; Nineveh (Palace of Ashurbanipal); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, fig. 101.



Fig. 4.77. Relief; Yazilikaya; ca. 1450-1200. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 263.

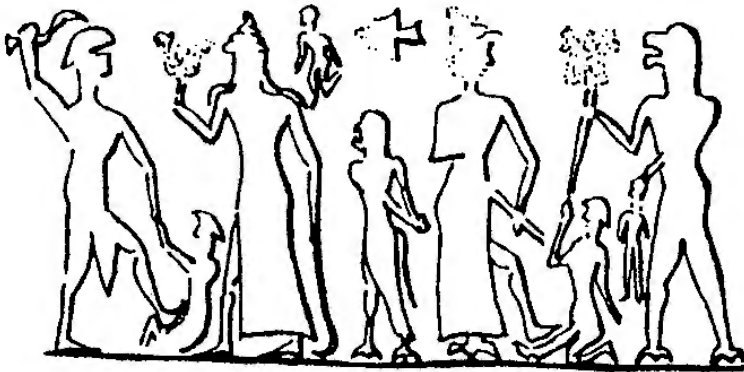


Fig. 4.78. Cylinder seal impression; Sippar; Old Babylonian (reign of Sumulael [1880-1845]). After Green, "The Lion-Demon in the Art of Mesopotamia and Neighbouring Regions," fig. 2.

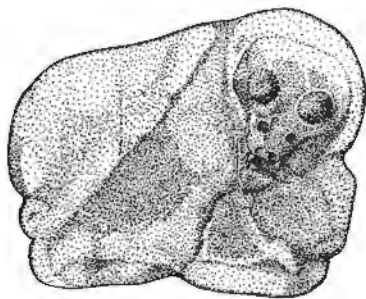


Fig. 4.79. Amulet; Habuba Kabira South; ca. 3500-3300. Cf. Weiss, ed., *Ebla to Damascus*, no. 28.



Fig. 4.80. Cylinder seal; Akkadian Period. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 9.

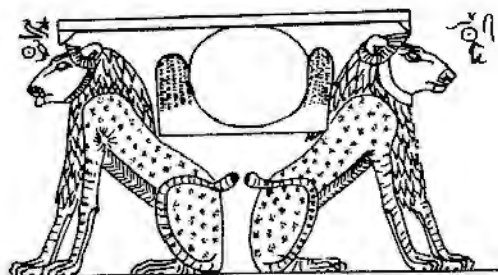


Fig. 4.81. Illustration on Papyrus of Ani; Dynasty 18. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 17.

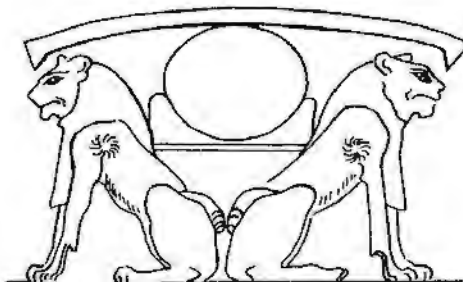


Fig. 4.82. Illustration on papyrus (Book of the Dead); New Kingdom. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 18.

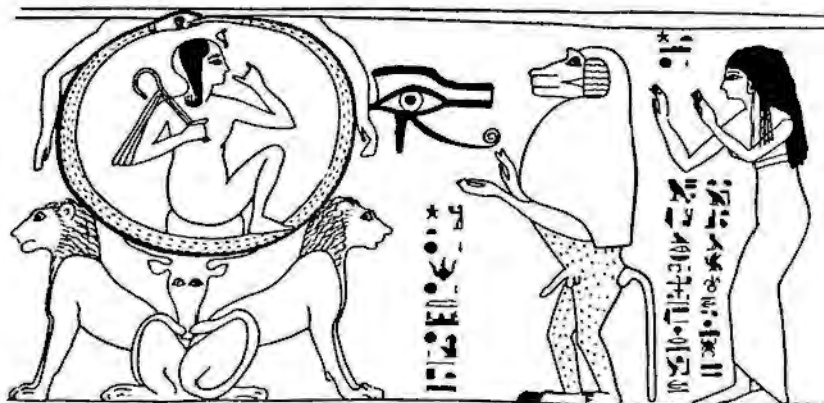


Fig. 4.83. Illustration on Papyrus of Heruben; Dynasty 21. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 39.



Fig. 4.84. Lion/Battlefield Palette; Hierakonpolis; ca. 3000. Cf. Rühlmann, “Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphbild,” Taf. 1a.

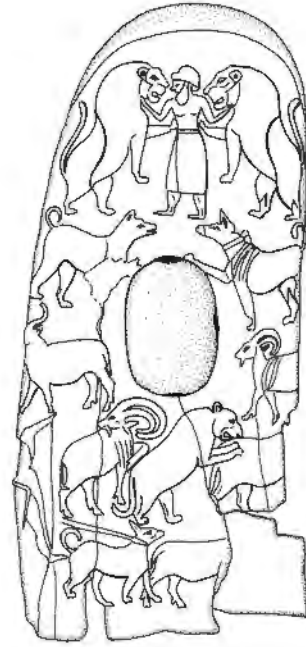


Fig. 4.85. Ivory knife handle; Gebel el-Arak; late Predynastic Period. Cf. *ANEP*, 290.

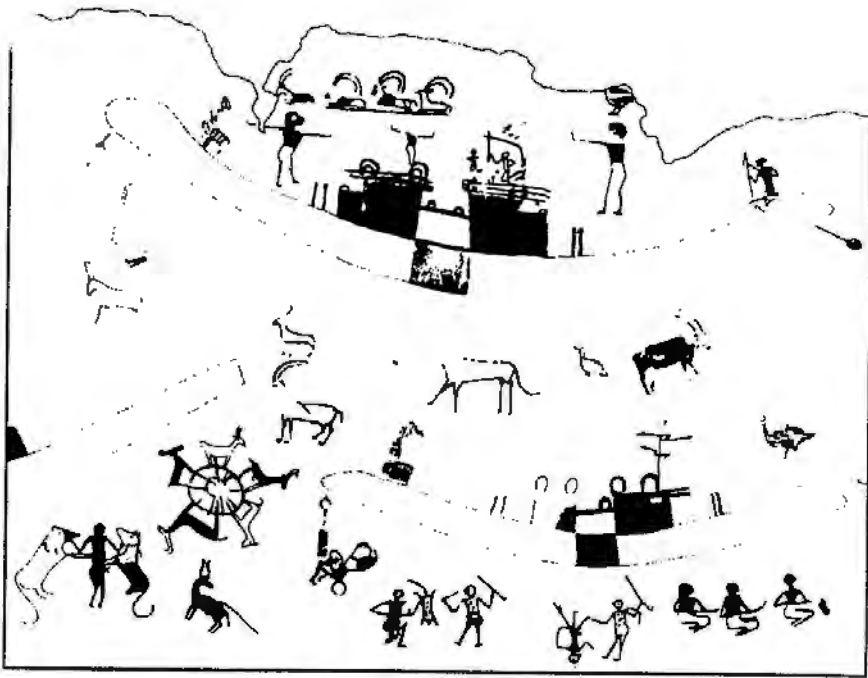


Fig. 4.86. Wall painting; Hierakonpolis (Tomb 100); Predynastic Period. After Goldwasser, *From Icon to Metaphor*, fig. 6.

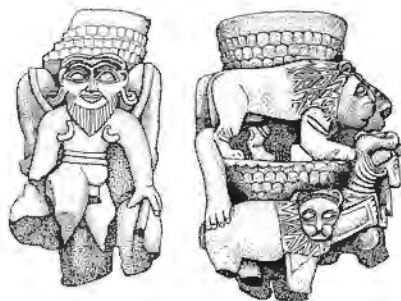


Fig. 4.87. Limestone vase; Tell Agrab (Diyala region); ca. 3000. After Behm-Blancke, *Das Tierbild in der altmesopotamischen Rundplastik*, 38 Abb. 7a, b; cf. Pierre Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, fig. 230 and p. 444.

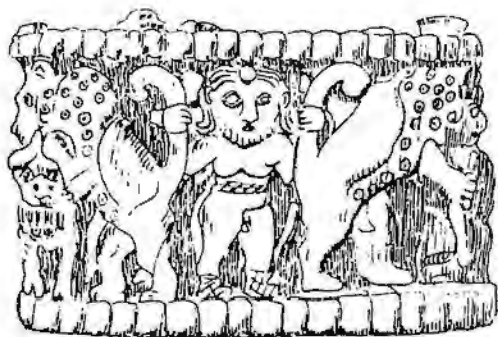


Fig. 4.88. Limestone base of vase (?); Tell Agrab (Diyala region); ca. 3000. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 14.

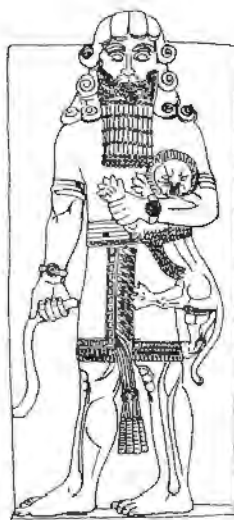


Fig. 4.89. Gypsum relief; Khorsabad (Dur-Sharrukin) (Palace of Sargon II); 8th c. (721-705). After Madhloom, *Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art*, Pl. LIII, 4; cf. Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, figs. 604-605 and p. 455.

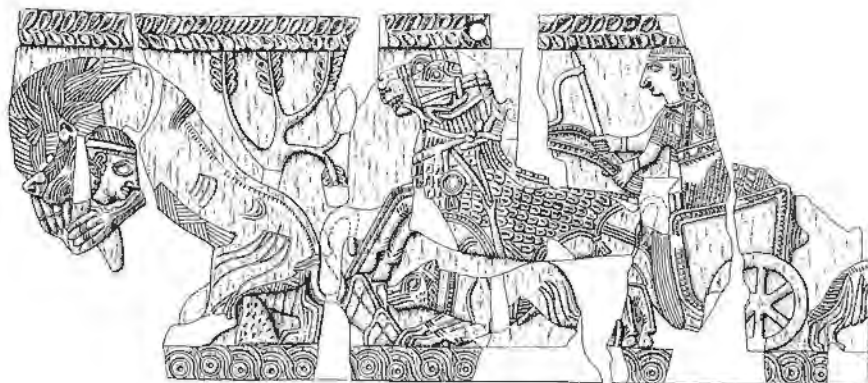


Fig. 4.90. Ivory box; Nimrud (Southeast [burnt] Palace); probably early 9th c. After Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 126.



Fig. 4.91. Decorative shield; Tutankhamun (1336-1327). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 31 Abb. 10.

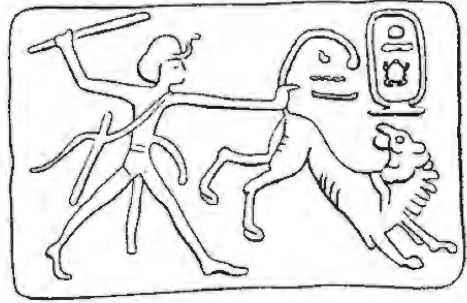


Fig. 4.92. Jasper plaque; Thutmose II (1492-1479). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 31 Abb. 7.



Fig. 4.93. Scarab; Sardinia; 5th or 4th c. After Harden, *Phoenicians*, fig. 82a.



Fig. 4.94. Rectangular plate seal; Dynasty 25 or 26 (8th-6th c.). After Wiese, *Zum Bild des Königs*, Abb. 151.



Fig. 4.95. Cylinder seal; Ur III Period. After Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, 19 Text-fig. 2.



Fig. 4.96. Gold covered wood; Valley of the Kings (Tomb of Tutankhamun); 14th c. (ca. 1336-1327). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 43 Abb. 18.

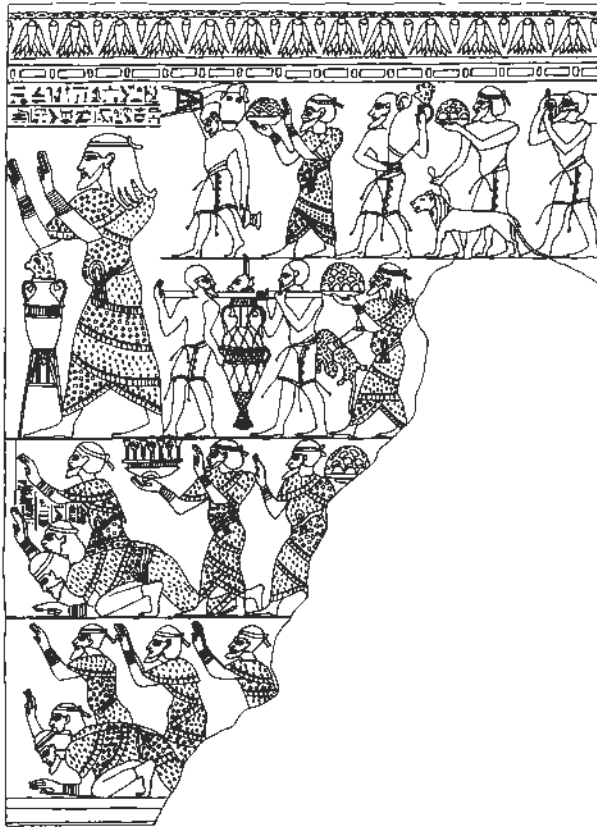


Fig. 4.97. Wall painting; Thebes (Tomb 40; Tomb of Huy); Tutankhamun (1336-1327). Cf. *ANEP*, 52.

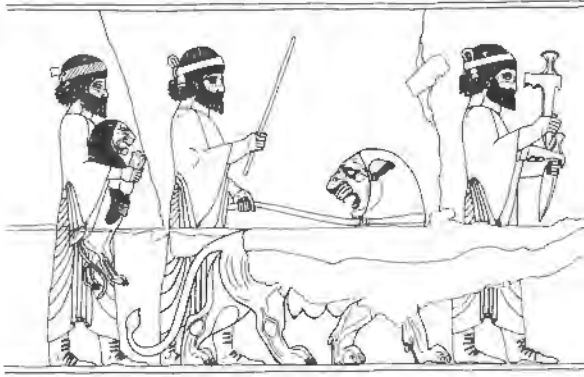


Fig. 4.98. Relief (detail of Elamite delegation); Persepolis (Apadana); 5th c. Cf. Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, fig. 151 and p. 337.



Fig. 4.99. Relief; Ramesses II (1279-1213). After Ceram, *Secret of the Hittites*, 173.

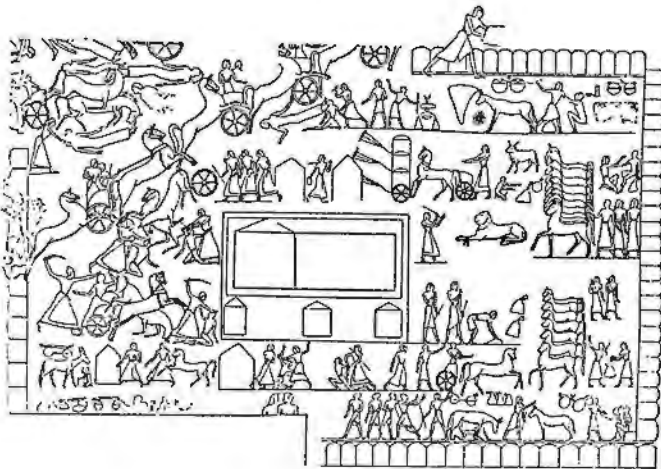


Fig. 4.100. Relief; Ramesses II (1279-1213). After Ceram, *Secret of the Hittites*, 191.

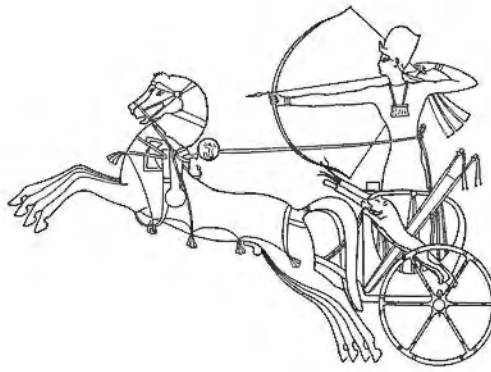


Fig. 4.101. Relief; Ramesses II (1279-1213). After Pope, *Song of Songs*, 292 fig. 5.

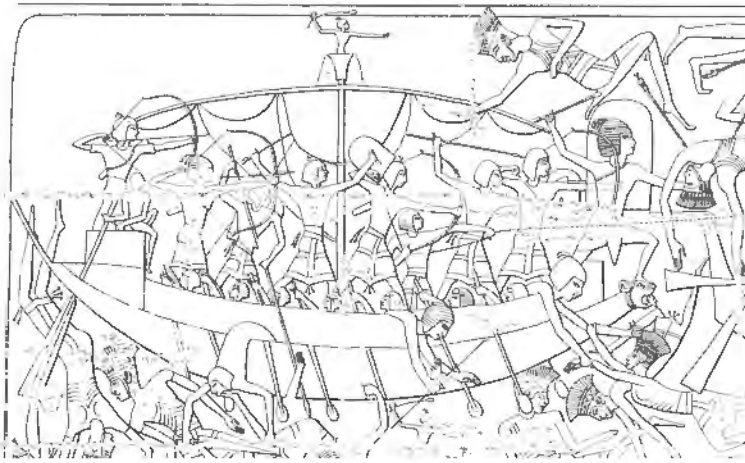


Fig. 4.102. Relief; Medinet Habu (Exterior of North wall; second court); Ramesses III (1184-1153). After Nelson et al., *Medinet Habu I*, Pl. 39; cf. *ANEP*, 341.



Fig. 4.103. Sandstone relief; Medinet Habu (Eastern high gate of North wall); Ramesses III (1184-1153). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 103.

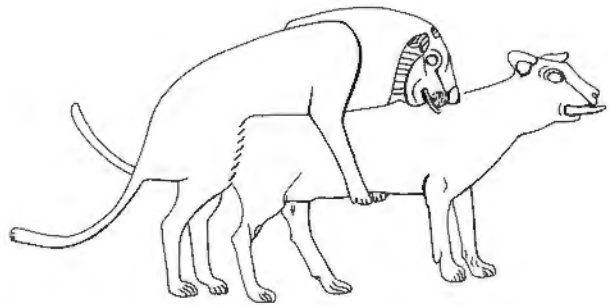


Fig. 4.104. Limestone relief; Meir (Tomb of Ukh-hotep); ca. 1920. Cf. Malek, *Egyptian Art*, fig. 110.

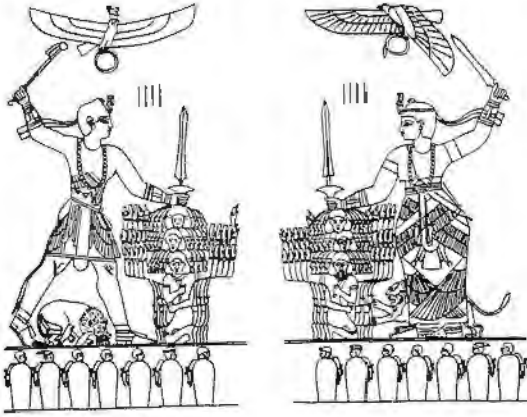


Fig. 4.105. Relief; Naga (Lion temple); 1st c. After Rühlmann, "Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild," Taf. IIIe-f.



Fig. 4.106. Granite statue; Karnak; Ramesses VI (1143-1136). After Rühlmann, "Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild," Taf. III.



Fig. 4.107. Bronze bowl; Palestrina, Italy (Bernardini tomb); later 7th c. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 392.



Fig. 4.108. Bronze bowl; Nimrud; 7th c. (?). After Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, Abb. 32.



Fig. 4.109. Clay bulla; Nineveh; 7th c. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus. 278b; cf. Collon, *Near Eastern Seals*, fig. 2B.

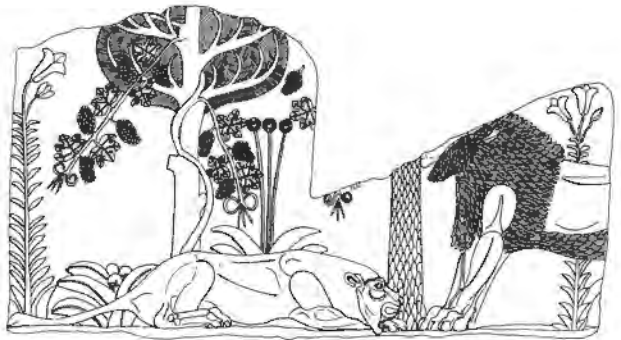


Fig. 4.110. Relief; Nineveh (Palace of Ashurbanipal); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 209.

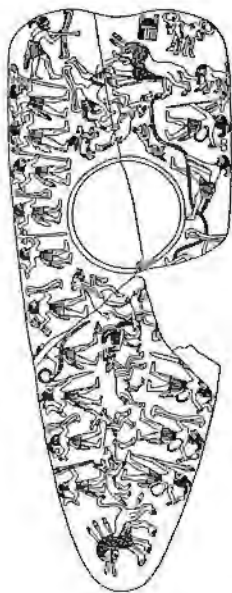


Fig. 4.111. Hunter's Palette; Predynastic Period. After Keel, Küchler, and Uehlinger, *Orte und Landschaften der Bibel I*, 145 Abb. 73.

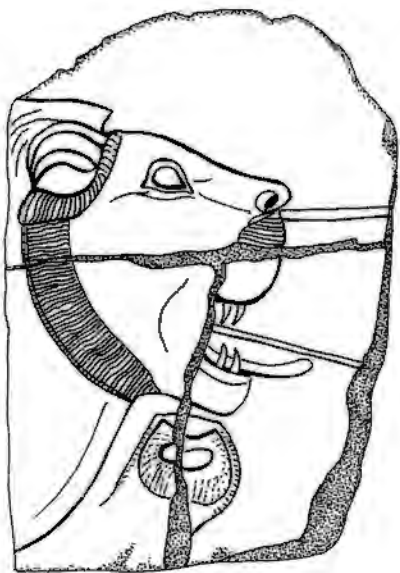


Fig. 4.112. Relief; Tell el-Amarna; Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (1352-1336). Cf. ABAT2, Abb. 76.



Fig. 4.113. Painted wooden casket; Valley of the Kings (Tomb of Tutankhamun); 14th c. (ca. 1336-1327). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, Pl. XVI.



Fig. 4.114. Painted wooden casket; Valley of the Kings (Tomb of Tutankhamun); 14th c. (ca. 1336-1327). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, Pl. XVII.



Fig. 4.115. Limestone ostrakon; Valley of the Kings; Ramesside. Cf. Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 2:390 fig. 245.

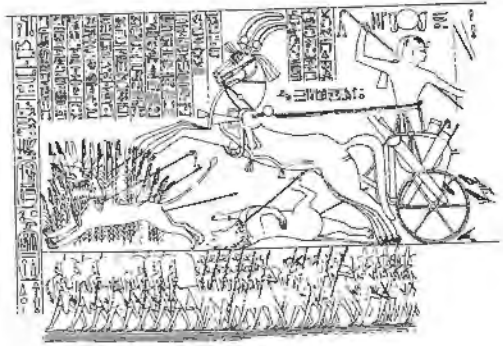


Fig. 4.116. Relief; Medinet Habu; Ramesses III (1184-1153). After Wreszinski, *Löwenjagd im alten Aegypten*, Abb. 39.



Fig. 4.117. Alabaster relief; Nimrud (Palace of Ashurnasirpal II); 9th c. (ca. 883-859). Cf. *ANEP*, 184.

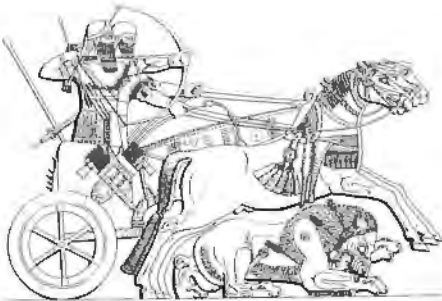


Fig. 4.118. Relief; Nimrud (Palace at Ashurnasirpal II); 9th c. (ca. 883-859). After Curtis and Reade, ed., *Art and Empire*, fig. on 163.



Fig. 4.119. Limestone relief; Nimrud (Palace of Ashurnasirpal II); 9th c. (ca. 883-859). Cf. *ABAT2*, Abb. 119; Albenda, "Ashurnasirpal II Lion Hunt Relief BM124534," fig. 2. See also **fig. 4.160** below.



Fig. 4.120. Gypseous alabaster relief; Nineveh (North Palace of Ashurbanipal); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Parrot, *Nineveh and Babylon*, fig. 63.

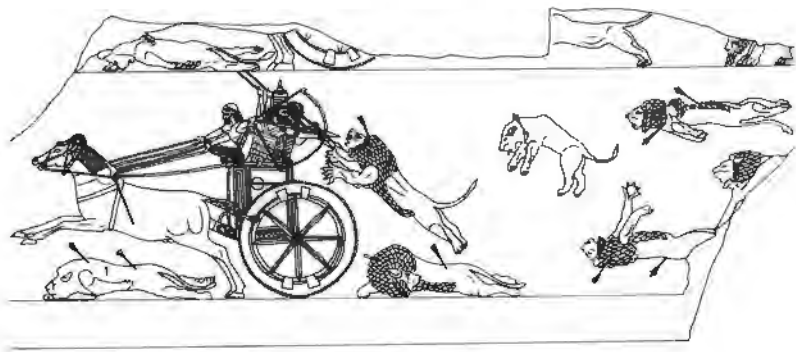
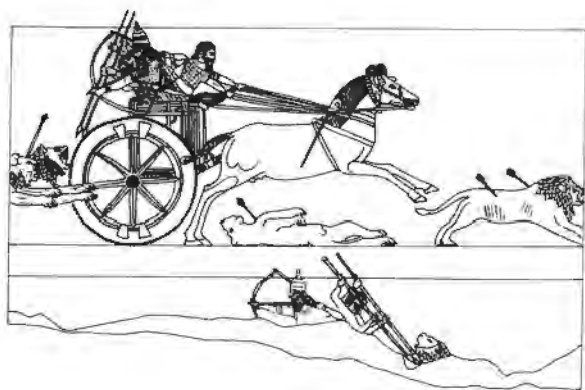


Fig. 4.121. Relief; Nineveh (North Palace of Ashurbanipal; Room S¹, Slabs A-B); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Russell, *Writing on the Wall*, fig. 71.

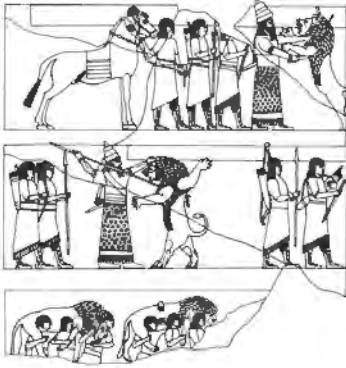


Fig. 4.122. Relief; Nineveh (North Palace of Ashurbanipal; Room S¹, Slab C); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Russell, *Writing on the Wall*, fig. 72.

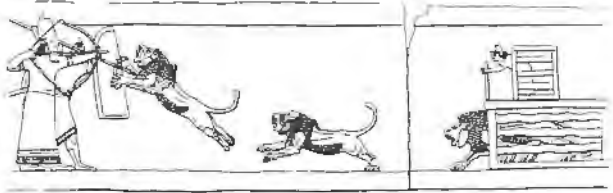


Fig. 4.123. Relief; Nineveh (North Palace of Ashurbanipal; Room S/I, Slabs D-E); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). After Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*, Abb. 9.

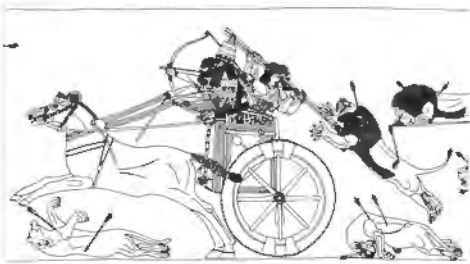


Fig. 4.124. Relief; Nineveh (North Palace of Ashurbanipal; Room C, North East Wall); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Weissert, "Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph," fig. 3.

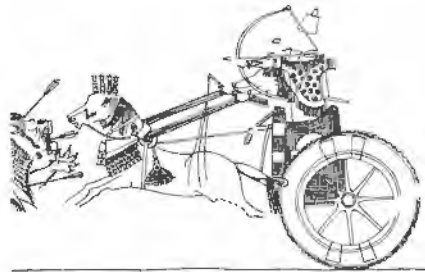


Fig. 4.125. Wall painting; Til Barsip; 7th c. After Madhloom, *Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art*, Pl. VII, 2; cf. Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 382.



Fig. 4.126. Wall painting; Til Barsip; 7th c. After Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, fig. 112.

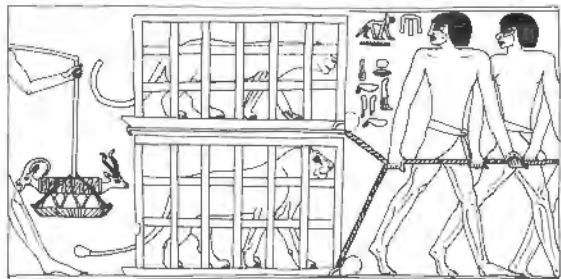


Fig. 4.127. Relief; Saqqara (Tomb of Ptahhotep); Dynasty 5. Cf. Wreszinski, *Löwenjagd im alten Aegypten*, Abb. 9.



Fig. 4.128. Stela; Nineveh (North Palace of Ashurbanipal; Room C, North East Wall); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Weissert, “Royal Hunt and Royal Triumph,” fig. 4.

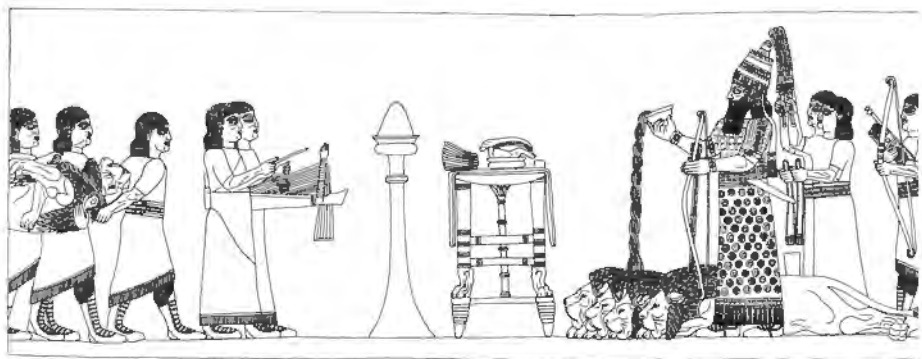


Fig. 4.129. Alabastrine limestone relief; Nineveh (North Palace of Ashurbanipal; Room S¹ Slab D); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. *ANEP*, 626.



Fig. 4.130. Detail of wall relief; Nineveh (North Palace of Ashurbanipal); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). After Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, fig. 22.

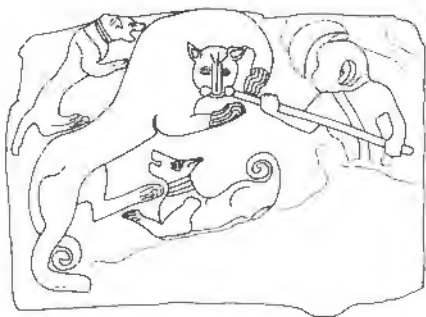


Fig. 4.131. Relief; Alaja Hüyük; LBA. Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 269.

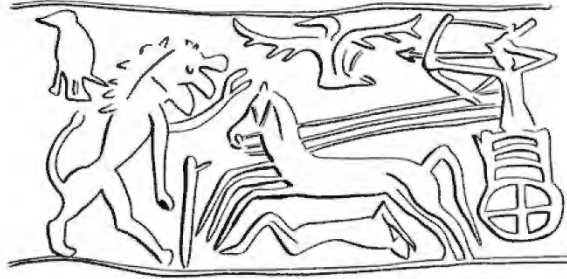


Fig. 4.132. Cylinder seal; Ugarit; LBA (ca. 1350-1200). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 38 Abb. 13.



Fig. 4.133. Ivory panel; Ugarit; LBA (ca. 1400-1350). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 383.

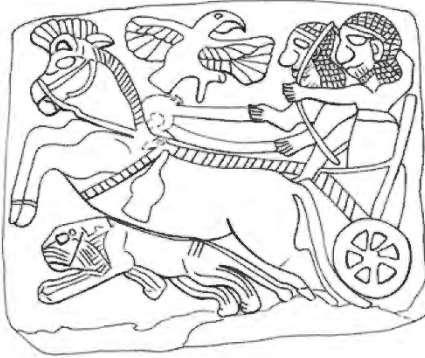


Fig. 4.134. Relief; Tell Halaf; LBA (13th c.). Cf. Madhloom, *Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art*, Pl. XIV, 3; Wreszinski, *Löwenjagd im alten Aegypten*, Abb. 47.



Fig. 4.135. Seal; Enkomi; LBA. After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 85 fig. 049.



Fig. 4.136. Steatite scarab; LBA or early IA I (Ramesside). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 31 Abb. 8

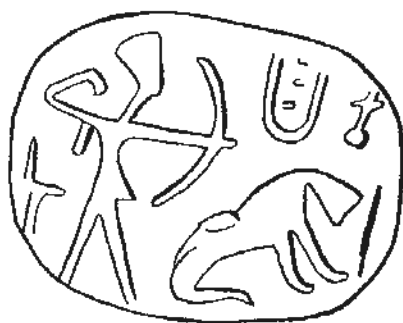


Fig. 4.137. Scarab; LBA or early IA I (Ramesside). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 31 Abb. 9.



Fig. 4.138. Steatite scarab; LBA or early IA I (Ramesside). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 51 Abb. 21.



Fig. 4.139. Scarab; LBA or early IA I (Ramesside). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 51 Abb. 24.



Fig. 4.140. Cylinder seal; Minet el-Beida; ca. 1450-1350. After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 51 Abb. 7.

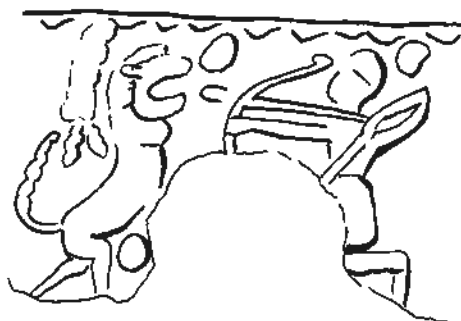


Fig. 4.141. Cylinder seal; Ugarit; ca. 1550-1350. After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 275 Abb. 48.



Fig. 4.142. Steatite seal; LBA or early IA I (Ramesside). After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 51 Abb. 26.



Fig. 4.143. Basalt relief; Tell Halaf (Palace of Kapara); early 9th c. Cf. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 124.



Fig. 4.144. Ivory plaque; Ziwiye; late 8th-7th c. After Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, fig. 71.

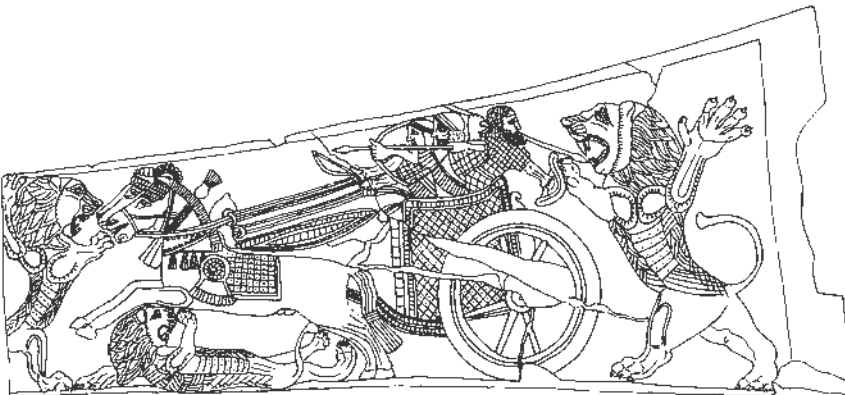


Fig. 4.145. Ivory; Ziwiye; late 8th c. Cf. Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, fig. 134 and p. 310.



Fig. 4.146. Ivory; Ziwiye; 8th c. Cf. *ANEP*, 127.



Fig. 4.147. Orthostat relief; Malatya; ca. 850-700. Cf. Akurgal, *Art of the Hittites*, Pl. 105.

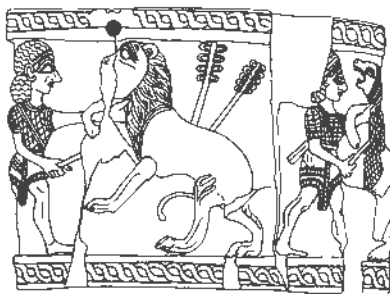


Fig. 4.148. Ivory unguent box; Nimrud; 9th or 8th c. Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 371.

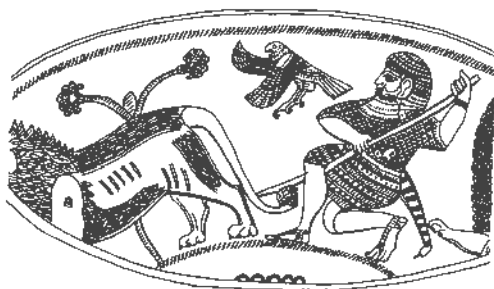


Fig. 4.149. Bronze bowl; Nimrud; 9th or 8th c. Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, figs. 388-389.



Fig. 4.150. Chalcedony scaraboid (probably Ammonite?) of Mikabel (למכאל); unprovenanced (late 9th-8th c.). Cf. CWSSS #938.



Fig. 4.151. Limestone scaraboid (Phoenician or Aramaic) of Pamin (פמין); unprovenanced (5th c.). After Ornan, "The Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals," 55 fig. 5; cf. CWSSS #1097.



Fig. 4.152. Cylinder seal; Thebes; probably Darius I (521-486). After Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, fig. 89.



Fig. 4.153. Stone scaraboid (Aramaic) of tyln (תילן); unprovenanced (5th c.). Cf. CWSSS #852.

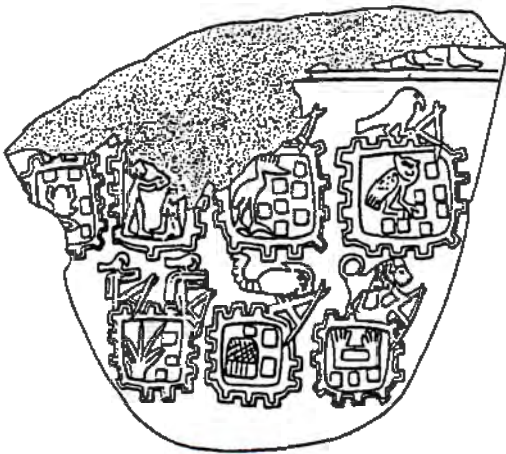


Fig. 4.154. Cities (or Libyan) Palette; Predynastic Period. After Goldwasser, *From Icon to Metaphor*, fig. 7.

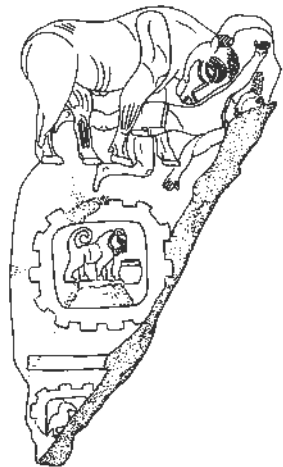


Fig. 4.155. Bull Palette (reverse); Predynastic Period. Cf. ANEP, 292.



Fig. 4.156. Black granite sphinx; Amenemhet III (1843-1798). Cf. Aldred, *Egyptian Art*, fig. 86.



Fig. 4.157. Painted limestone sphinx; Deir el-Bahri; Hatshepsut (1479-1457). Cf. Aldred, *Egyptian Art*, fig. 115.

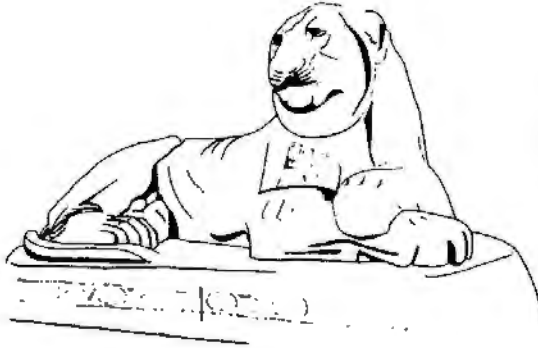


Fig. 4.158. Granite statue; Soleb (Sudan) and then Gebel Barkal; Amenhotep III (1390-1352). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 163.

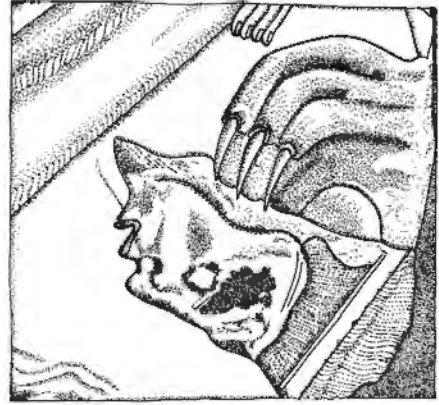


Fig. 4.159. Relief; Abusir; Dynasty 5 (Neuserre). Cf. ABAT2, Abb. 16.

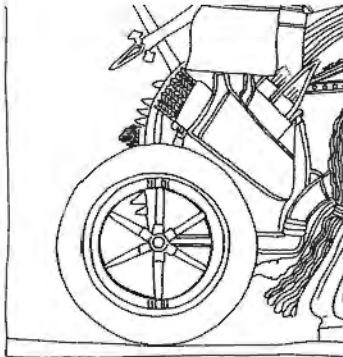


Fig. 4.160. Limestone relief; Nimrud (Palace of Ashurnasirpal II); 9th c. (ca. 883-859). Detail of **fig. 4.119**. Cf. ABAT2, Abb. 119; Albenda, "Ashurnasirpal II Lion Hunt Relief BM124534," fig. 2.

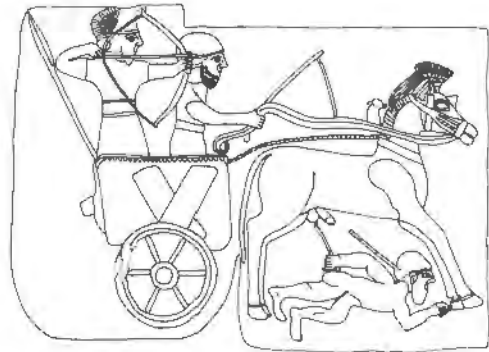


Fig. 4.161. Basalt relief; Zinjirli; perhaps 8th c. Cf. ANEP, 172. Note the detail of **fig. 4.160**.



Fig. 4.162. Throne; Amenhotep III (1390-1352). After Metzger, *Königsthron und Gottesthron*, 1:81 fig. 234.

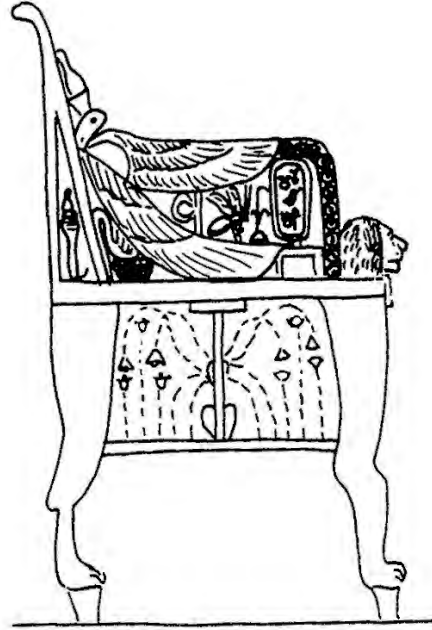


Fig. 4.163. Throne; Tutankhamun (1336-1327). After Metzger, *Königsthron und Gottesthron*, 1:81 fig. 253.

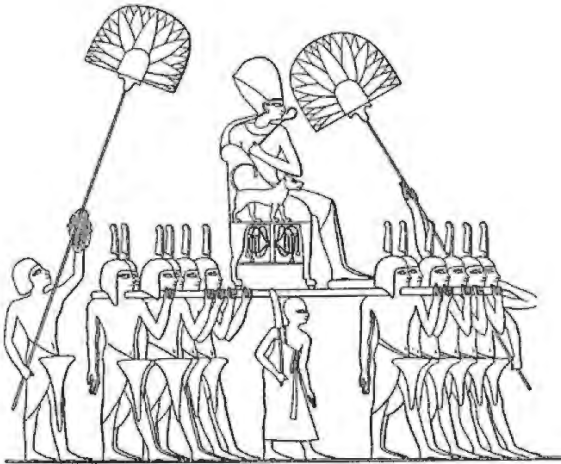


Fig. 4.164. Depiction of the throne of Haremhab (1323-1295). After Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 65.

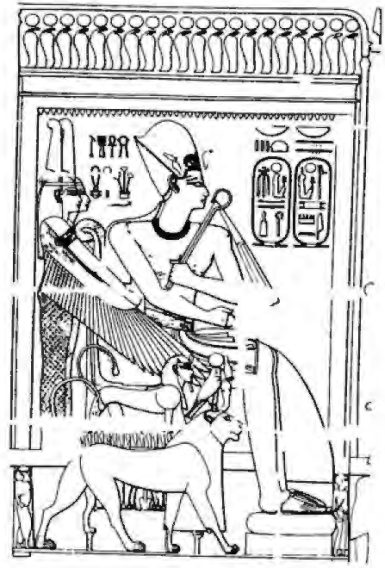


Fig. 4.165. Relief; Medinet Habu; Ramesses III (1184-1153). After Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst*, Abb. 13.

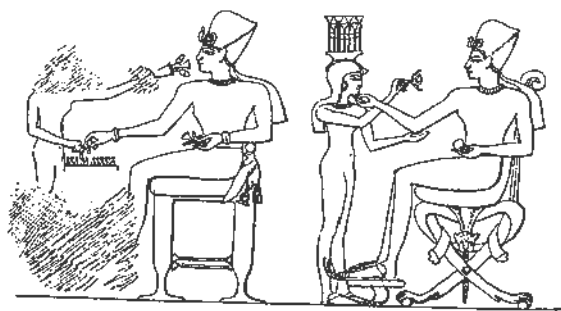


Fig. 4.166. Depiction of the throne of Ramesses III (1184-1154). After Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 76.

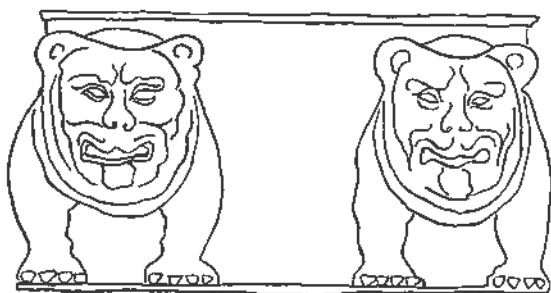


Fig. 4.167. Lion throne; Boghazköy; LBA. After Ceram, *Secret of the Hittites*, 166.

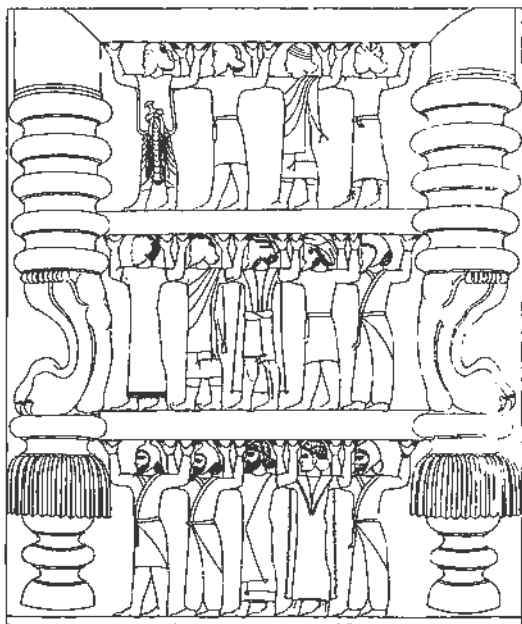


Fig. 4.168. Relief; Persepolis (Hall of a Hundred Columns); 5th c. (Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 476a.

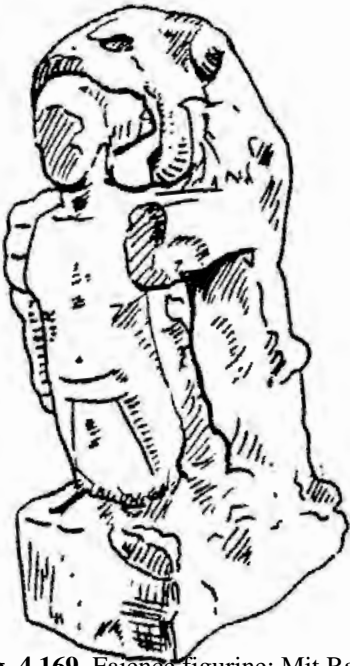


Fig. 4.169. Faience figurine; Mit Rahina (Memphis); Ramesses II (1279-1213). After Rühlmann, "Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild," Taf. IIa.

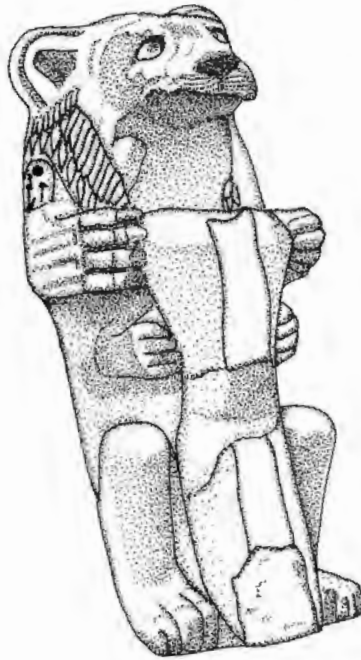


Fig. 4.170. Faience figurine; Qantir; Ramesses II (1279-1213). Cf. Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 2:337 fig. 212.

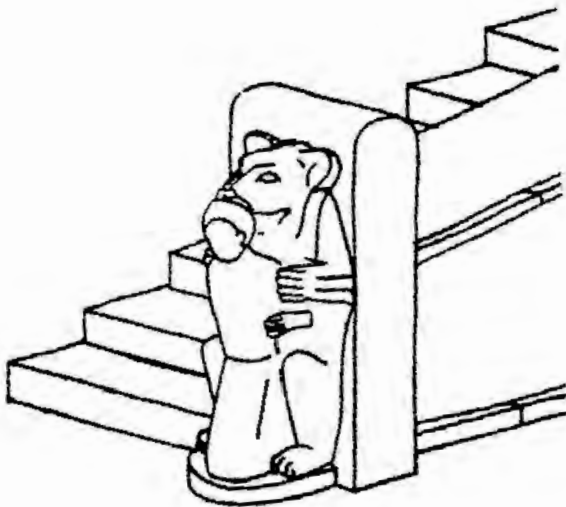


Fig. 4.171. Reconstruction of **fig. 4.170**. After Rühlmann, "Der Löwe im altägyptischen Triumphalbild," Taf. IIc.



Fig. 4.172. Wooden statuette; Thebes; probably Dynasty 12. Cf. Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, 1:225 fig. 141.



Fig. 4.173. Bronze weight; Nimrud; Shalmaneser V (726-722). Cf. Curtis and Reade, ed., *Art and Empire*, #203.



Fig. 4.174. Bronze weight; Nimrud; Shalmaneser V (726-722). Cf. Curtis and Reade, ed., *Art and Empire*, #202.



Fig. 4.175. Bronze weight; Nimrud; Shalmaneser V (726-722). Cf. Curtis and Reade, ed., *Art and Empire*, #204.



Fig. 4.176. Agate or carnelian scaraboid (Aramaic) of lllahpazar (אלהעזר); unprovenanced (first half of the 8th c.). Cf. CWSSS #770.



Fig. 4.177. Quartz scaraboid (Aramaic) of gnt (גנת); unprovenanced (5th c.). Cf. CWSSS #781.



Fig. 4.178. Agate scaraboid (Aramaic) of rpty (רפתח); Khorsabad (Palace of Sargon); second half of 8th c. Cf. CWSSS #843.



Fig. 4.179. Jasper scaraboid (Aramaic) of Shilpyabab (? (לשעיבב); unprovenanced. After Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, illus 205b; cf. CWSSS #851.



Fig. 4.180. Stone scaraboid (Ammonite) of Uzziel son of Zatt-/zwt (זתא/זוא); unprovenanced (6th c.). Cf. CWSSS #961.



Fig. 4.181. Agate scaraboid (Aramaic or Ammonite) of A'imm (לאחמה); unprovenanced (8th c.). Cf. CWSSS #1104.



Fig. 4.182. Chalcedony-agate scaraboid (Aramaic or Ammonite) of mrpX (?); unprovenanced. Cf. CWSSS #1111.



Fig. 4.183. Lapis lazuli scaraboid (Aramaic?) of sl/y (לסעלי); unprovenanced (8th c.). Cf. CWSSS #829.



Fig. 4.184. Chalcedony scaraboid (probably Ammonite) of Elibar/Elibara[k] (לאלבר/לאלבר[ך]); unprovenanced. Cf. CWSSS #888.

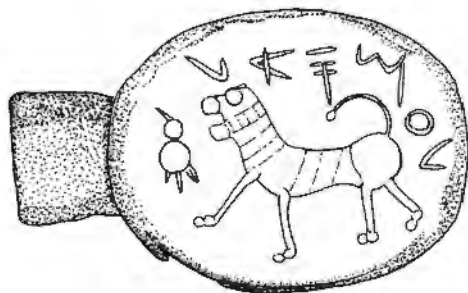


Fig. 4.185. Hematite or bronze (Ammonite) plaque (or biconvex scaraboid) of Amasbel (לעמסאל), Face B; unprovenanced (second half of 8th-early 7th c.). Cf. CWSSS #964.



Fig. 4.186. Agate scaraboid (possibly Phoenician) of Yeddai (לחדרי); unprovenanced (late 9th-8th c.). After Gubel, "The Iconography of Inscribed Pheonician Glyptic," 105 fig. 10; cf. CWSSS #738.

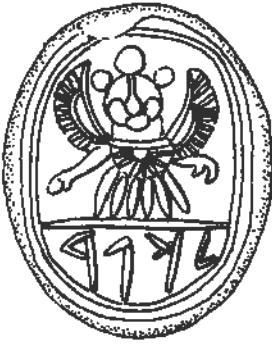


Fig. 4.187. Carneoline agate scaraboid (Phoenician or Aramaic) of *kpr* (לכפר); unprovenanced (late 8th-early 7th c.). Cf. CWSSS #1086.



Fig. 4.188. Chalcedony scaraboid (Phoenician or Aramaic) of *kpr* (לכפר); unprovenanced (late 8th-early 7th c.). Cf. CWSSS #1087.



Fig. 4.189. Mace-head of Mesilim; Lagash (Telloh); Early Dynastic II. Cf. Parrot, *Sumer*, fig. 160A.

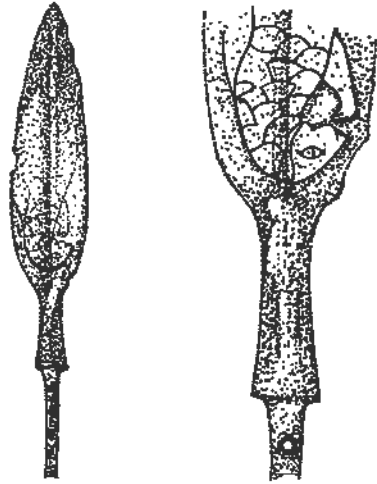


Fig. 4.190. Lance head; Lagash (Telloh); Early Dynastic Period. After Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, fig. 29.

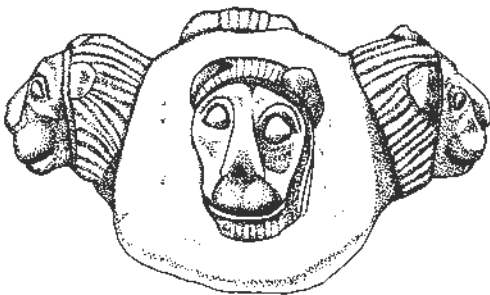


Fig. 4.191. Stone mace-head; Tell Agrab; Early Dynastic Period. Cf. Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, Pl. 38.

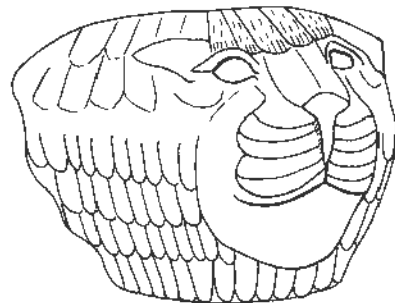


Fig. 4.192. Mace-head of Gudea; Lagash (Telloh); 22nd c. Cf. Parrot, *Sumer*, fig. 291.

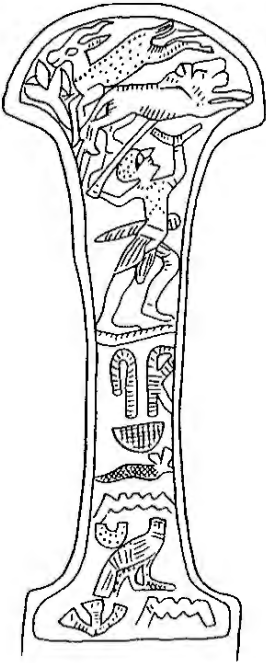


Fig. 4.193. Dagger hilt; Saqqara (Tomb of Abd); ca. 1600. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 282.

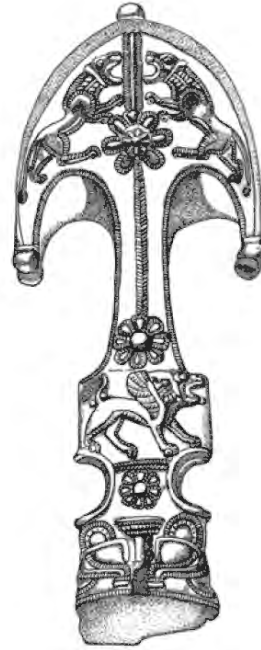


Fig. 4.194. The T. E. Lawrence dagger-hilt (silver); probably 7th c. Cf. Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 411.

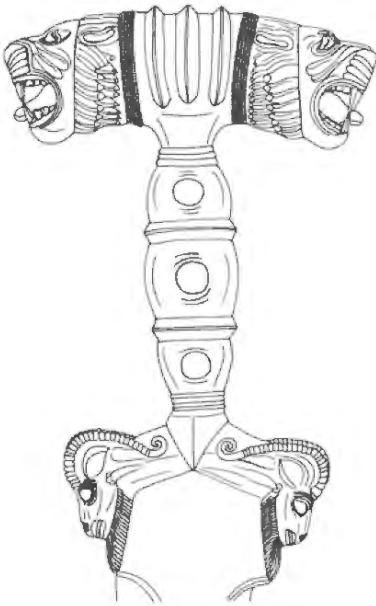


Fig. 4.195. Gold sword hilt; Ecbatana; 5th c. Cf. Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, fig. 155 and p. 338.



Fig. 4.196. Gold dagger and sheath; Byblos; 18th c. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 281.

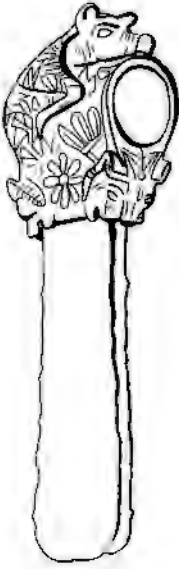


Fig. 4.197. Axe-head; Ugarit; ca. 1400-1300. After Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, Abb. 39.

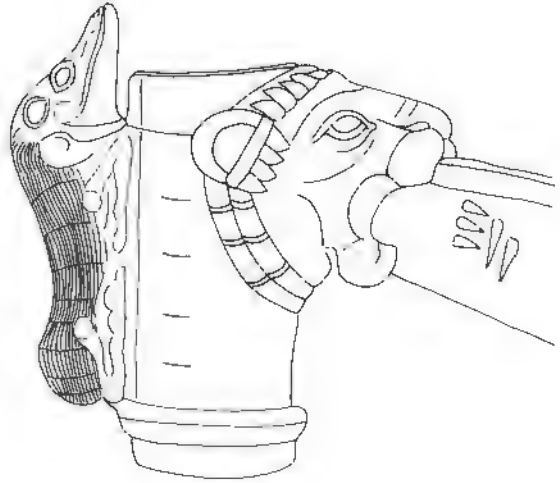


Fig. 4.198. Silver and electrum axe-head inscribed with name of Untash-Napirisha; Dur Untash (Choga Zambil); ca. 1250. Cf. Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, fig. 530 and p. 453.

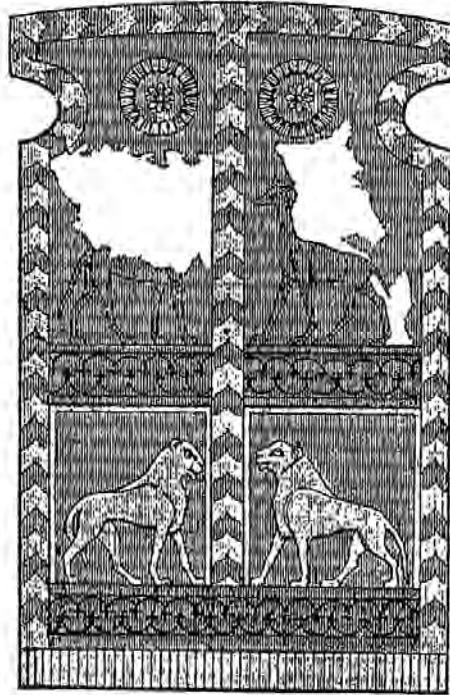


Fig. 4.199. Embroidered coat of mail; Tomb of Ramesses III (1184-1153). After Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 545.

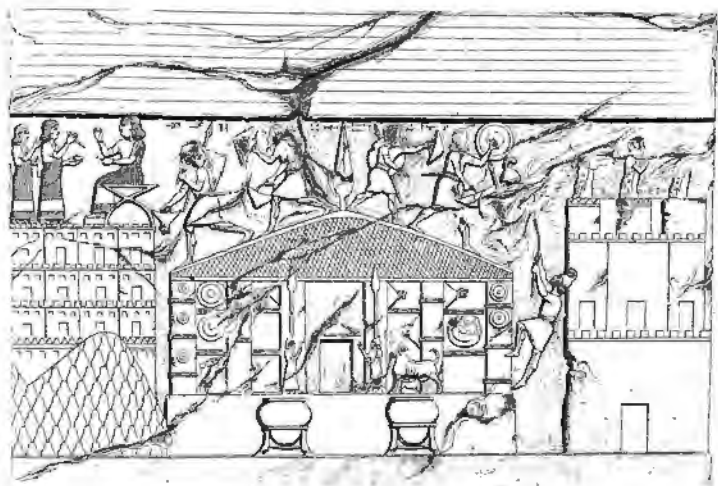


Fig. 4.200. Drawing of relief; Khorsabad (Palace of Sargon II); 8th c. (ca. 721-705). After Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 16.

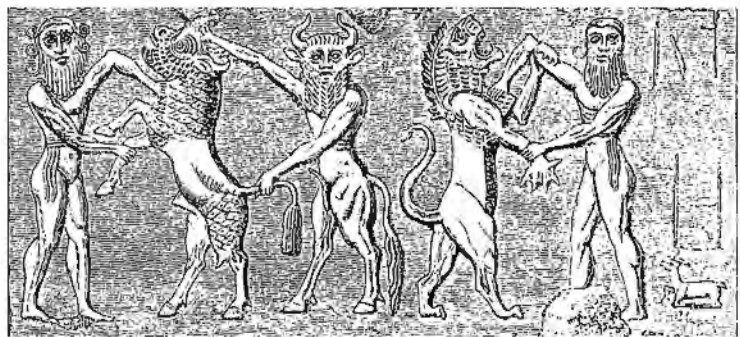


Fig. 4.201. Cylinder seal; 3rd millennium. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 4.

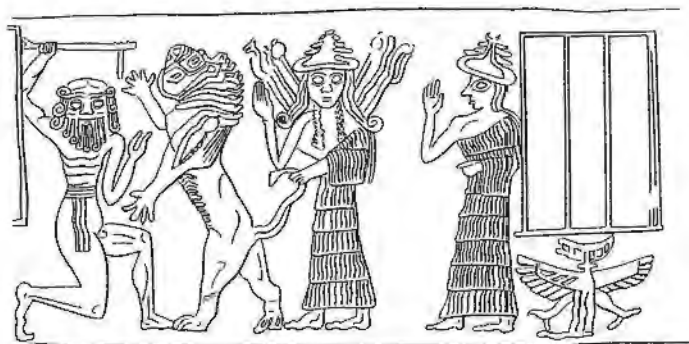


Fig. 4.202. Cylinder seal; 3rd millennium. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 9.



Fig. 4.203. Cylinder seal; Early Dynastic Period. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 23.



Fig. 4.204. Cylinder seal; Early Dynastic Period. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 28.

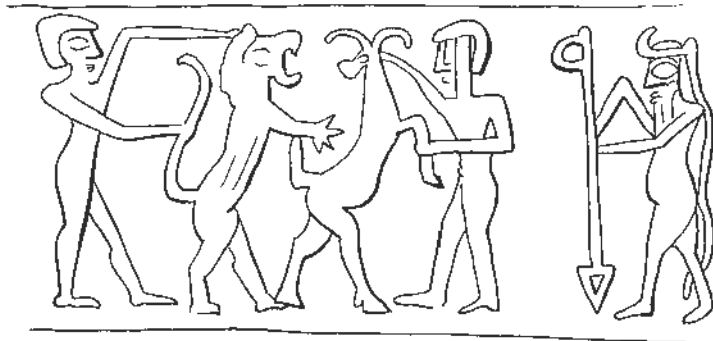


Fig. 4.205. Cylinder seal; Akkadian Period. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 34.



Fig. 4.206. Cylinder seal; Akkadian Period. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 38.

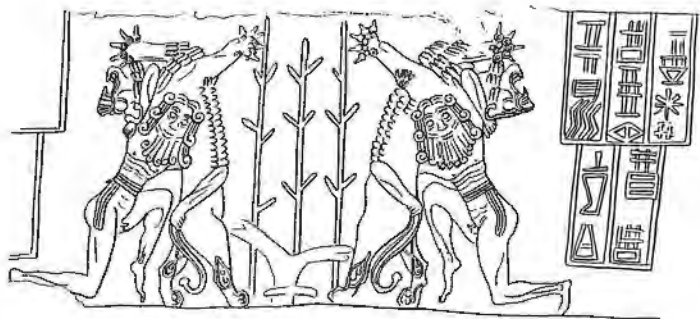


Fig. 4.207. Cylinder seal; 3rd millennium. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 3.

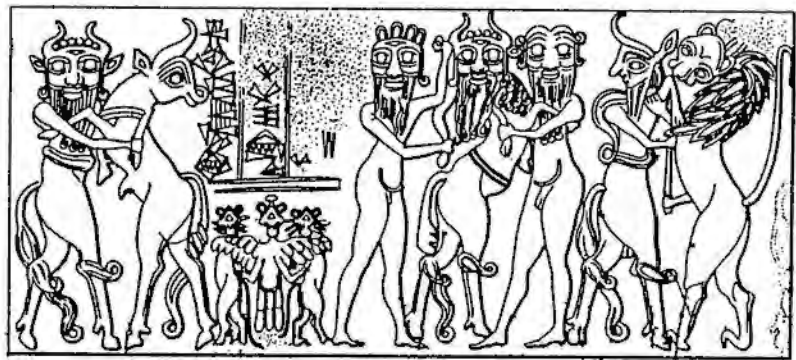


Fig. 4.208. Cylinder seal; 3rd millennium. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 1.



Fig. 4.209. Boss of shield; Luristan, beginning of first millennium. Cf. Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, fig. 130 and p. 304.

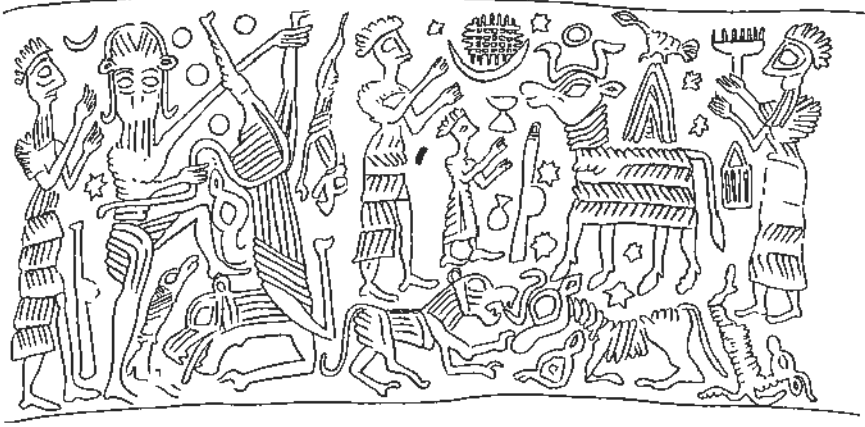


Fig. 4.210. Cylinder seal; Kültepe; ca. 1950-1850. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 144.

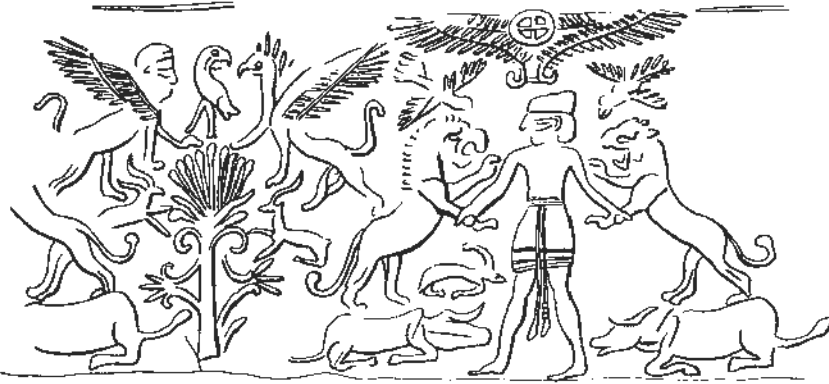


Fig. 4.211. Cylinder seal; Middle Assyrian; 14th-13th c. After Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*, Abb. 67.



Fig. 4.212. Seal impression of Šaušattar; Nuzi; 15th c. After Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, Abb. 11.



Fig. 4.213. Relief; Tell Halaf; 9th c. After Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, Abb. 136.



Fig. 4.214. Bronze bowl; Cyprus; 7th c. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 393; cf. Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, Abb. 137.



Fig. 4.215. Detail of relief; Nimrud; 9th c. (ca. 883-859). After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 224.

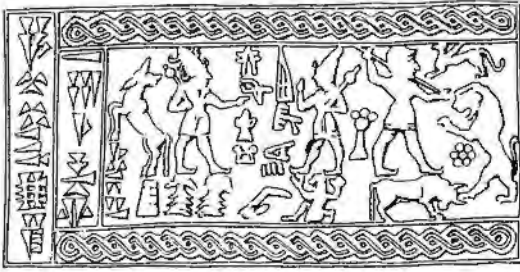


Fig. 4.216. Seal of Ini-Teshub; Carchemish; 13th c. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 166.

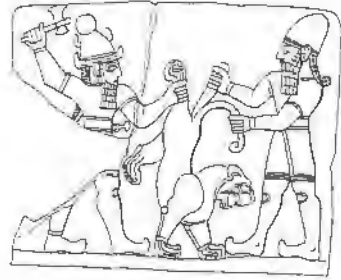


Fig. 4.217. Relief; Carchemish; LBA. After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 193 Abb. 26.



Fig. 4.218. Stela; Deir el-Medineh; Ramesses II (1279-1213). After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 267.



Fig. 4.219. Stela; Deir el-Medineh; Ramesses II (1279-1213). After Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*, Abb. 87.

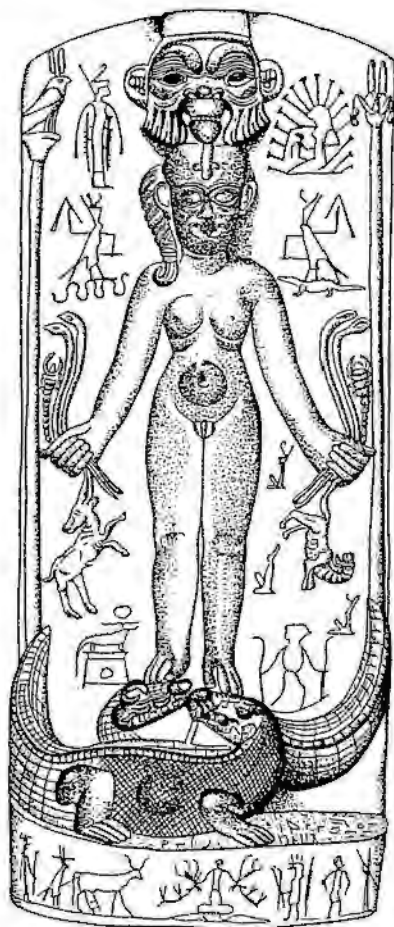


Fig. 4.220. Stela; 7th c. or 6th c. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 268.

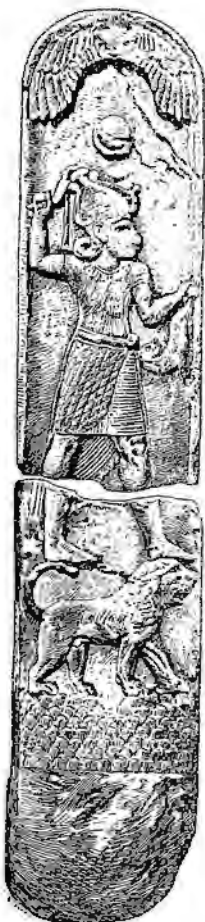


Fig. 4.221. Stela; Marathus (Amrit); probably 6th c. (date debated). After ABAT2 Abb. 307.

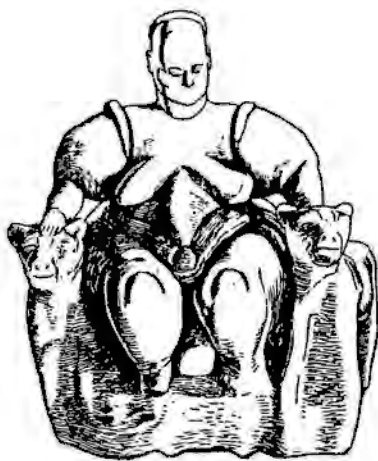


Fig. 4.222. Clay figure; Çatal Hüyük; 7th-6th millennium. After Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 13.



Fig. 4.223. Lion-headed mace used as a symbol on various objects from different sites and periods. After Van Buren, *Symbols of the Gods in Mesopotamian Art*, 191 (M7) and pp. 177-78.



Fig. 4.224. Basalt relief; Rujm el-ḤAbd; 9th-8th c. After Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, fig. 20.



Fig. 4.225. Cylinder seal; Akkadian Period. After Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, Abb. 169.

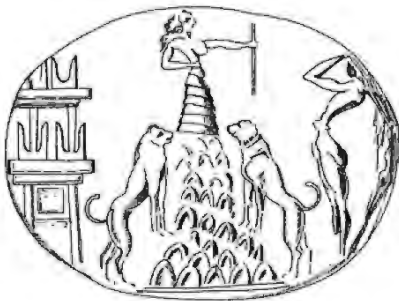


Fig. 4.226. Stamp seal; Knossos ("Palace of Minos"); ca. 1500. After Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 28.



Fig. 4.227. Cylinder seal; mid-late 2nd millennium (13th c.). After Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, Abb. 101.



Fig. 4.228. Cylinder seal; ca. 1750. After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 199 Abb. 31.



Fig. 4.229. Cylinder seal; ca. 1750. After Weiss, ed., *Ebla to Damascus*, fig. 17.



Fig. 4.230. Detail of cylinder seal; Hittite. After Woolley, *Art of the Middle East*, fig. 36.



Fig. 4.231. Clay relief (sculptor's model?); Ashur; 7th c. Cf. Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, Pl. 281.

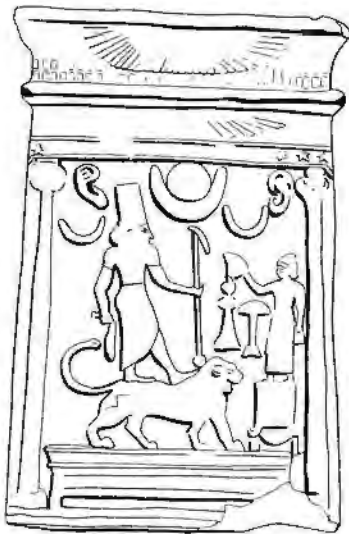


Fig. 4.232. Limestone stela; Tell Defenneh; Persian Period (ca. 525-332). After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 264.



Fig. 4.233. Cylinder seal; Old Babylonian Period. After Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, Abb. 15.

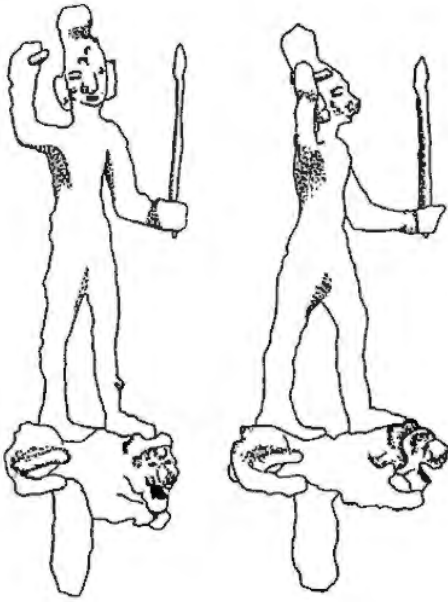


Fig. 4.234. Cast bronze figure; 14th c. After Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven*, fig. 1.



Fig. 4.235. Stela; al-Qadbun; ca. 1200-1000. Cf. Assaf, "Eine Stele des Gottes Baal im Museum von Darj-s," Taf. 40a.



Fig. 4.236. Cylinder seal; 12th c. After Keel/Shuval/Uehlinger, *Studien III*, 199 Abb. 33.



Fig. 4.237. Steatite cylinder seal; Ugarit; ca. 1500-1300. Cf. Weiss, ed., *Ebla from Damascus*, #124.



Fig. 4.238. Seal impression; Hittite. After Gurney, *Hittites*, 172 fig. 15 no. 3.



Fig. 4.239. Stone scaraboid (Phoenician or Aramaic) of Eidyarak (?) (לצדיך[?]); unprovenanced (7th c.). After Ornan, "The Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals," 62 fig. 35; cf. CWSSS #1098.



Fig. 4.240. Relief; Carchemish; ca. 850-700.
After Ceram, *Secret of the Hittites*, 74.



Fig. 4.241. Gold bowl; Hasanlu; 12th-11th c.
After Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, fig. 64.
Cf. fig. 4.261.



Fig. 4.242. Cylinder seal; Akkadian Period. After Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, Abb. 3.

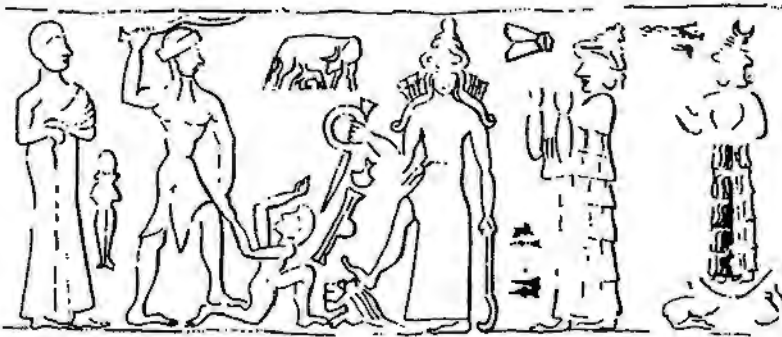


Fig. 4.243. Cylinder seal; 19th c. (Apil-Sin, ca. 1830-1813). After Keel, *Das Böcklein in der Milch*, Abb. 73.



Fig. 4.244. Cylinder seal; Tell Asmar; 19th-18th c. After Keel, *Das Böcklein in der Milch*, Abb. 74.



Fig. 4.245. Wall painting; Mari (Room 106 of Zimri-Lim's Palace); 18th c. (ca. 1775-1761). After Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, Abb. 9.



Fig. 4.246. Cylinder seal; ca. 700. After Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 23.

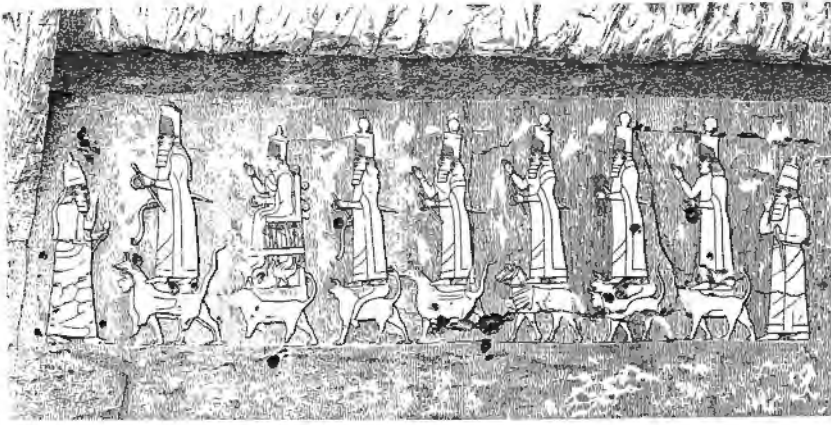


Fig. 4.247. Relief; Maltaya; 8th-7th c. After *ANEP*, 537.



Fig. 4.248. Brecia stela; Til Barsip; 8th c. After Madhloom, *Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art*, Pl. LIII, 3; cf. *ANEP*, 522.



Fig. 4.249. Stone relief; Neo-Babylonian Period. Cf. Oates, *Babylon*, fig. 84.

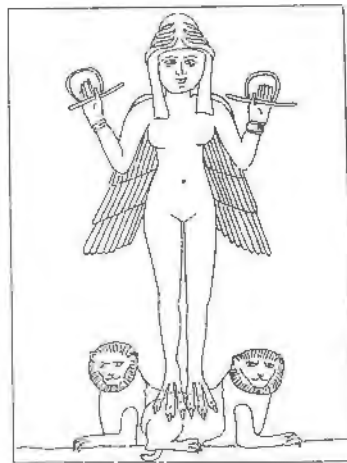


Fig. 4.250. Burney Relief. After Cornelius, "The Lion in the Art of the Ancient Near East," fig. 11.

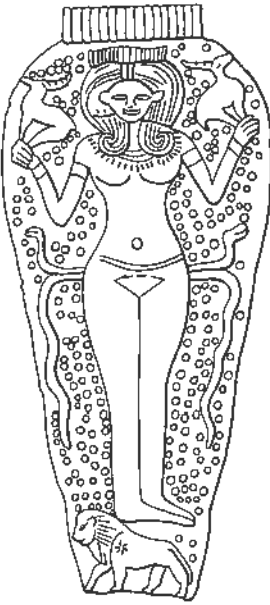


Fig. 4.251. Gold pendant; Minet el-Beida; ca. 1350. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 218.

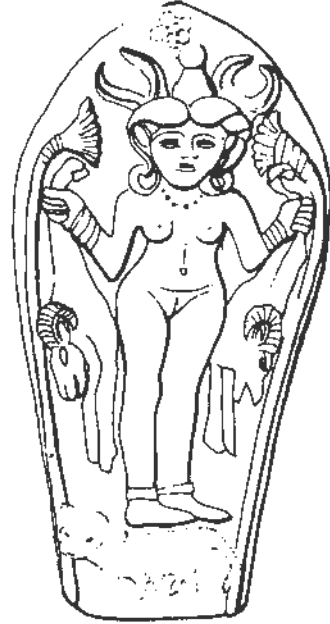


Fig. 4.252. Gold pendant; Ugarit; ca. 1350. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 217; cf. ANEP, 465.

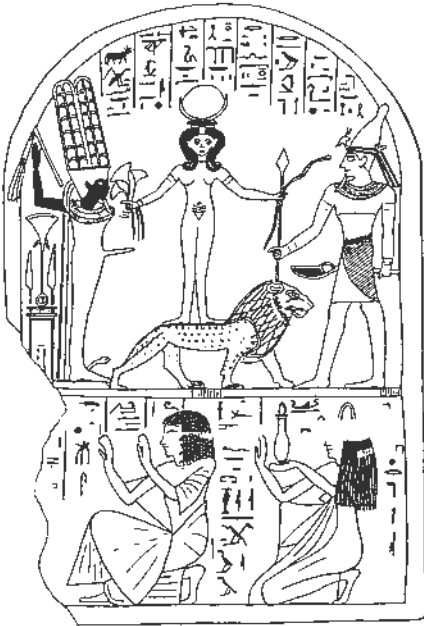


Fig. 4.253. Limestone stela; Deir el-Medineh; 13th c. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, 211; cf. Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 22.



Fig. 4.254. Limestone stela; ca. 1295-1186. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 204; cf. ANEP, 471.



Fig. 4.255. Limestone stela; ca. 1000. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 208; cf. ANEP, 472.



Fig. 4.256. The Winchester relief; probably 12th c. (Ramesses III, 1184-1153). After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 206.

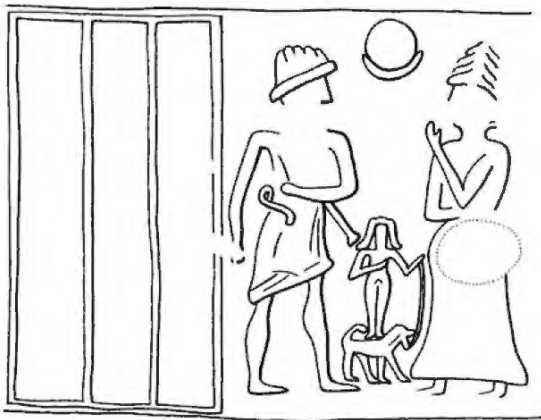


Fig. 4.257. Cylinder seal; ca. 1750. After Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 18.

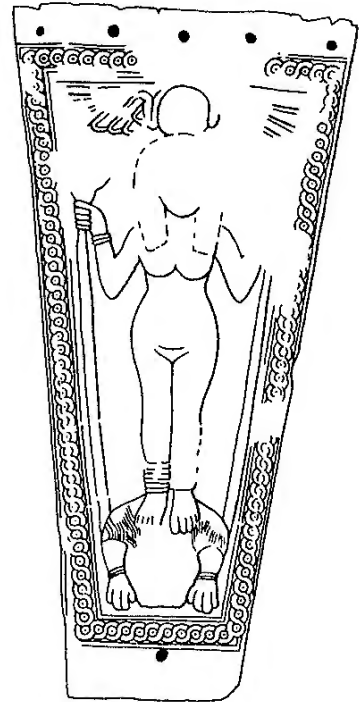


Fig. 4.258. Ivory; Nimrud; 9th-8th c. After Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 24.



Fig. 4.259. Rock relief; Yazilikaya; ca. 1250. After Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 29.

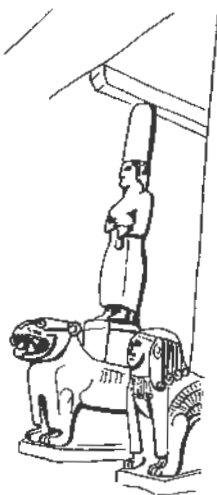


Fig. 4.260. Basalt statue; Tell Halaf; 9th c. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 278a. Cf. **fig. 4.303** below.



Fig. 4.261. Gold bowl; Hasanlu; 12th-11th c. After Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, fig. 63. Cf. **fig. 4.241**.



Fig. 4.262. Stela; Zinjirli; Esarhaddon (680-669). After ABAT2, Abb. 143.



Fig. 4.263. Seal impression; ca. 1750. After Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 27.

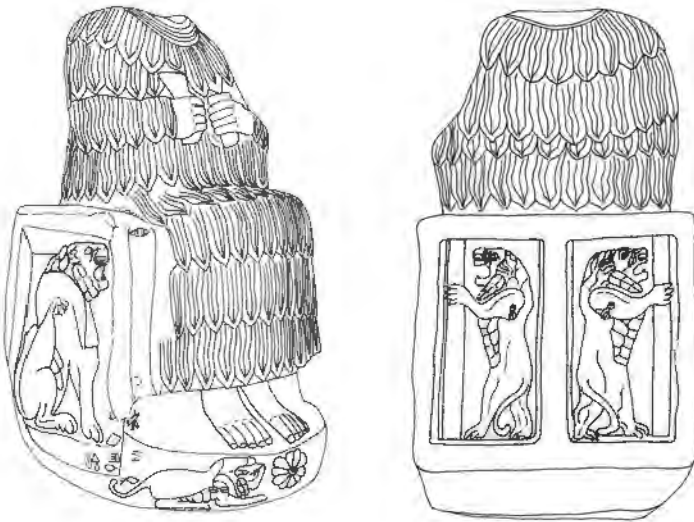


Fig. 4.264. Statue; Susa; Ur III Period (but date debated). Cf. Metzger, *Königsthron und Gottesthron*, 2:147 Taf. 72 Abb. 666 a-b.



Fig. 4.265. Cylinder seal; Akkadian Period. After Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, Abb. 1.



Fig. 4.266. Cylinder seal; Akkadian Period. After Keel, *Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen*, Abb. 2.



Fig. 4.267. Cylinder seal; Late Akkadian Period (ca. 2200). After Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 15.

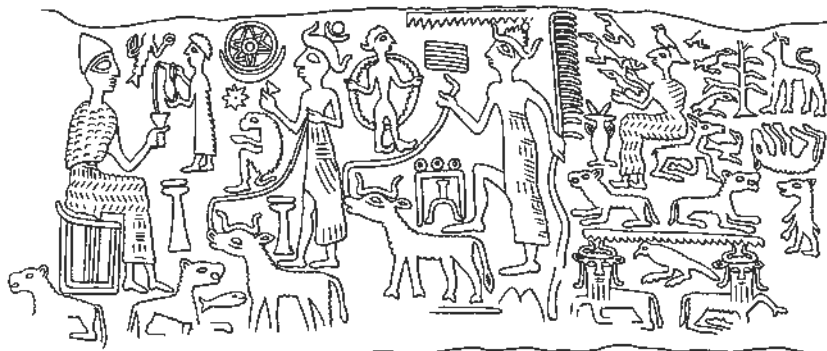


Fig. 4.268. Cylinder seal; Kültepe; ca. 1950-1850. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 122.



Fig. 4.269. Cylinder seal; Kültepe; 19th-18th c. After Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, Abb. 110.



Fig. 4.270. Cylinder seal; Kültepe; 19th-18th c. After Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, Abb. 111.



Fig. 4.271. Cylinder seal; ca. 2150-2000 (Ur III). After Keel, ed., *Monotheismus im Alten Israel und seiner Umwelt*, 71 Abb. 3.

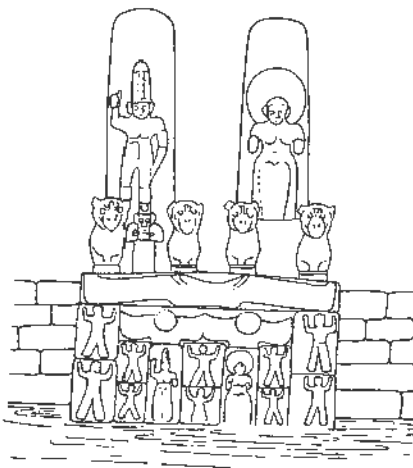


Fig. 4.272. Sculpture (reconstructed); Fassilar; ca. 1250-1000. After Macqueen, *Hittites*, fig. 78.

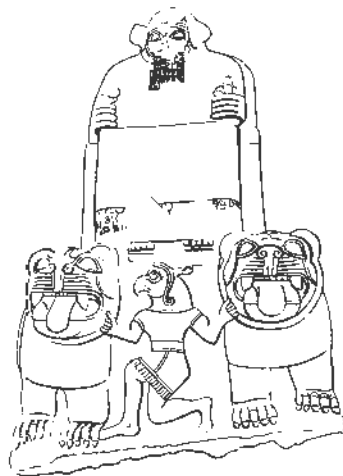


Fig. 4.273. Basalt statue; Carchemish (Royal gateway); ca. 1050-850. After Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, Abb. 113.



Fig. 4.274. Bronze votive figurine; Syria (?); 9th-8th c. Cf. Harden, *Phoenicians*, Pl. 87.



Fig. 4.275. Bronze; Late Egyptian Period. After Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen*, Abb. 19.

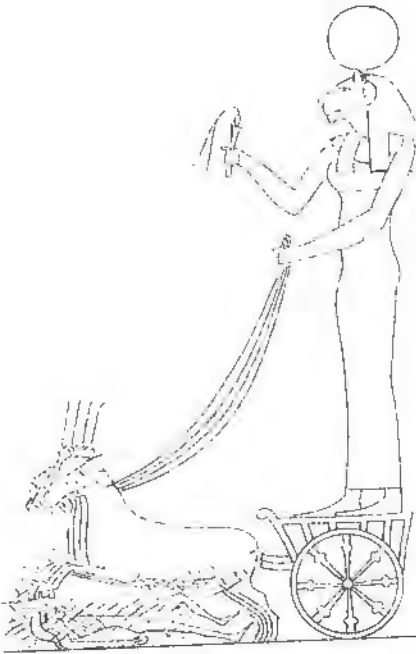


Fig. 4.276. Relief; Edfu (Horus Temple); 1st c. (Ptolemy XVI, ca. 30). After ABAT2, Abb. 278.



Fig. 4.277. Statuette; New Kingdom. After Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals*, 131 fig. 3y.

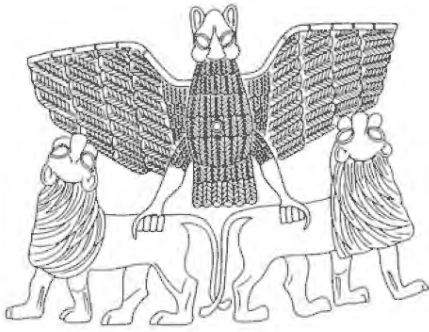


Fig. 4.278. Stone relief; Lagash (Telloh); Early Dynastic Period. After Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, fig. 86.



Fig. 4.279. Stela of Vultures/Eannatum, limestone; Lagash (Telloh); ca. 2500. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 110.

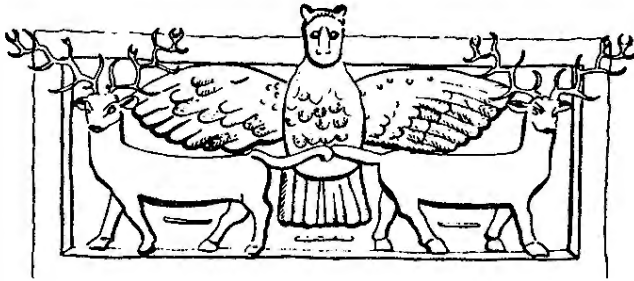


Fig. 4.280. Bronze relief; al-Ubaid; first half of 3rd millennium. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 164.

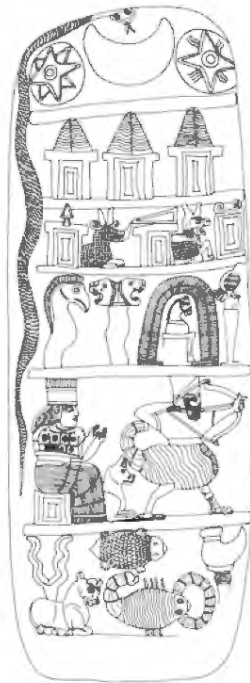


Fig. 4.281. Limestone *kudurru*; Abu Habbah; 12th c. (Nebuchadnezzar I). Cf. *ANEP*, 519.

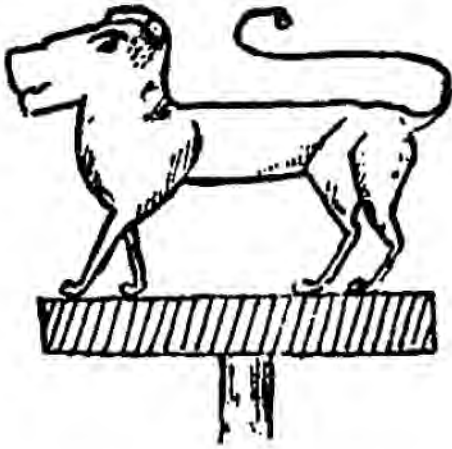


Fig. 4.282. Standard with lion used as a symbol on various objects; Lagash (Telloh); Ur III. After Van Buren, *Symbols of the Gods*, 190 (B6) and pp. 39-40.



Fig. 4.283. Relief; Yazilikaya; ca. 1250. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 323a.



Fig. 4.284. Relief; Carchemish; ca. 1050-850. After Gurney, *Hittites*, fig. 19.

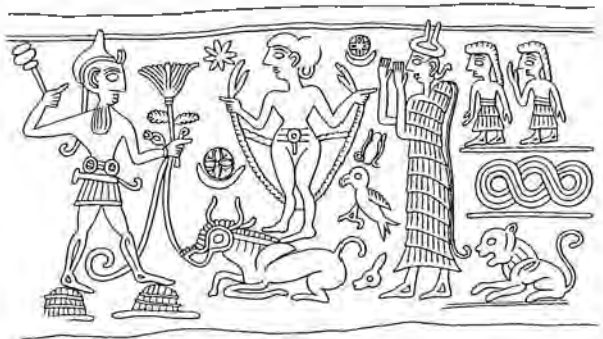


Fig. 4.285. Cylinder seal; ca. 1750. After Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder*, Abb. 158.



Fig. 4.286. Red burnished ware vessel; ca. 1920-1840. Cf. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 74.



Fig. 4.287. Relief; Nimrud; 9th c. (Ashurnasirpal II, ca. 883-859). Cf. Ellis, "Lion-Men," 76 fig. 1; Budge, *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum*, Pl. 16:1.



Fig. 4.288. Relief; Nimrud; 8th c. (Tiglath-Pileser III, 744-727). Cf. Ellis, "Lion-Men," 76 fig. 2; Barnett and Falkner, *Sculptures*, 129 and Pls. 1-2.



Fig. 4.289. Cylinder seal; 9th c. Cf. Ellis, "Lion-Men," 76 fig. 3; Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, 193, 215 and Pl. 33g.

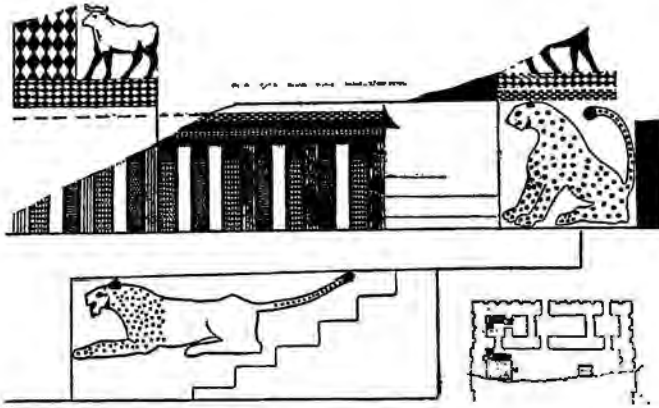


Fig. 4.290. Painting; Tell ʿUqair (altar); late 4th-early 3rd millennium. After Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, fig. 12.

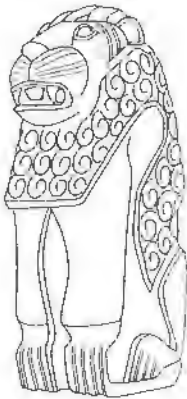


Fig. 4.291. Stone statue; Eridu (Temple of Enki); end of 3rd millennium. After Black and Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, fig. 97.

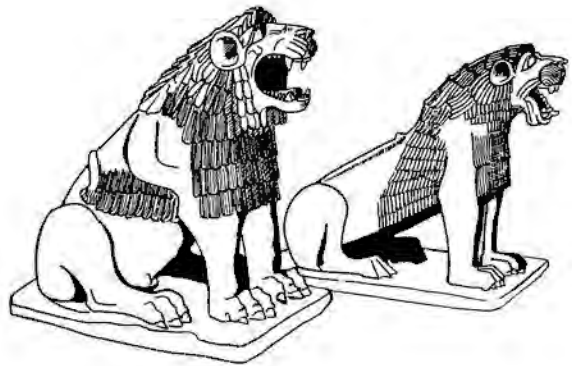


Fig. 4.292. Clay figures; Tell Harmal (Temple of Nisaba and Hani); early 2nd millennium. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 165.

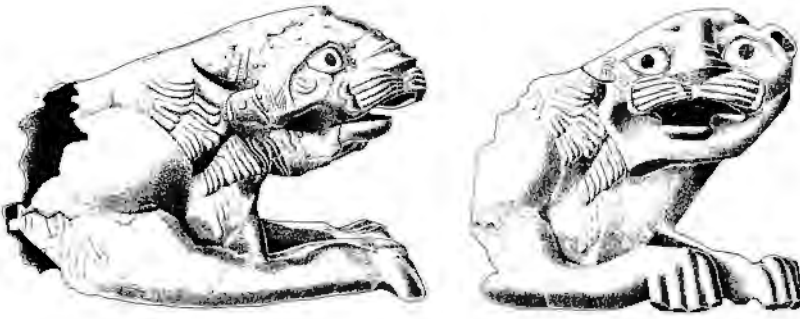


Fig. 4.293. Bronze statues; Mari (Temple of Dagan); 19th-18th c. After Beyer, Forrières, Lemaire, and Bargain, “Les lions du temple du ‘Roi du Pays’ de Mari,” 94 fig. 8.



Fig. 4.294. Terracotta plaque; ca. 1850-1650. Cf. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 84b.

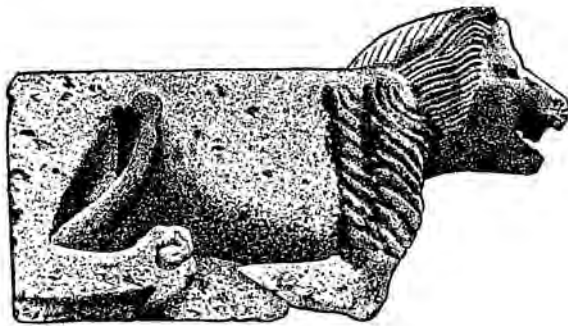


Fig. 4.295. Stone sculpture; Alalakh; 14th c. After Moortgat, *Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, fig. 80.

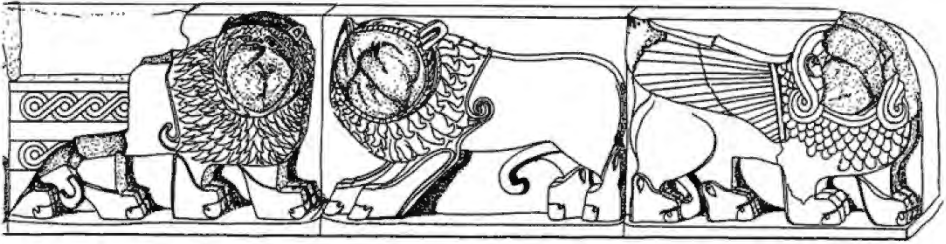


Fig. 4.296. Relief; ĠAin Dara (Temple staircase); ca. 1300-740. After Monson, "The New ĠAin Dara Temple," 24.

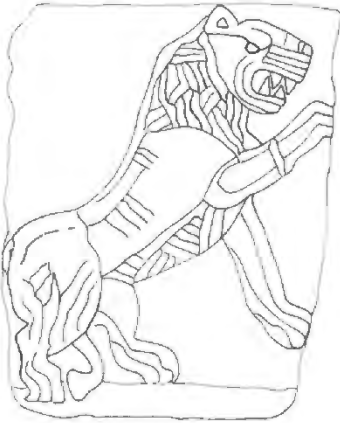


Fig. 4.297. Basalt orthostat; Tell Halaf (South wall of temple-palace); ca. 900-850. Cf. Weiss, ed., *Ebla to Damascus*, #180.

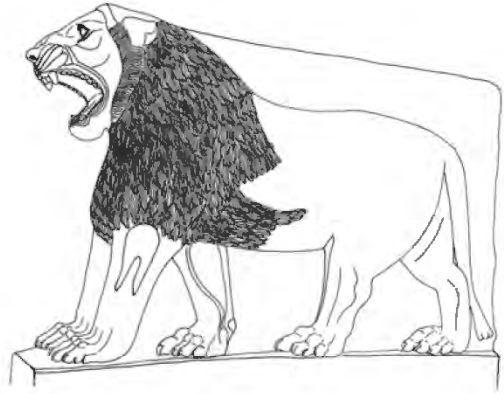


Fig. 4.298. Sculpture; Nimrud (Temple of Ishtar); 9th c. Cf. Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art*, fig. 186.

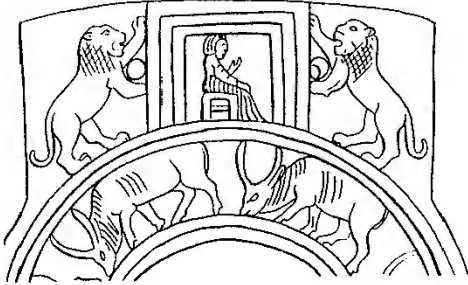


Fig. 4.299. Ivory; Nimrud; 9th-8th c. After Keel, *Deine Blicke*, Abb. 26.

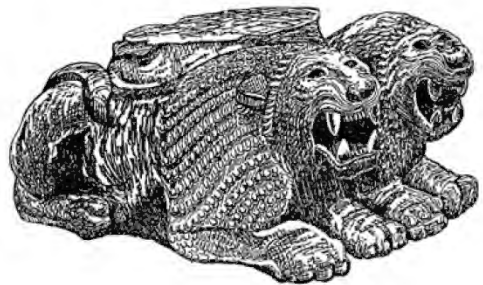


Fig. 4.300. Column base; Tell Taynat; 9th c. After Woolley, *Art of the Middle East*, fig. 55.

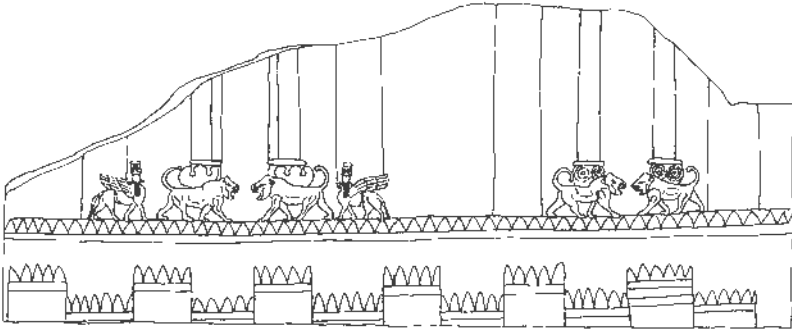


Fig. 4.305. Relief (depicting façade of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh?); Nineveh (Palace of Ashurbanipal); 7th c. (ca. 668-627). Cf. Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, fig. 59.

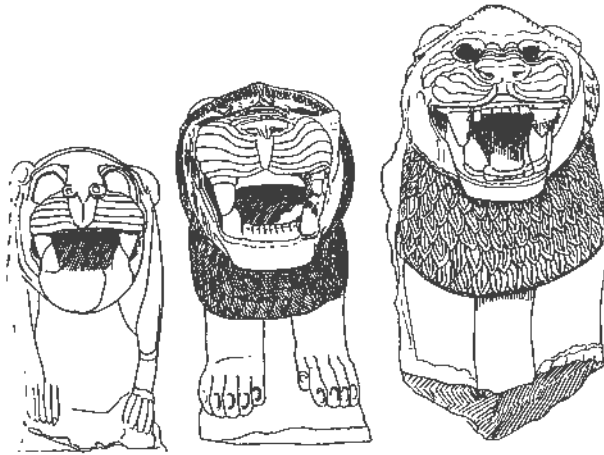


Fig. 4.306. Gate-guardian sculptures; Zinjirli; 9th-8th c. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 352.



Fig. 4.307. Relief with gate-lion; Sakjegovü; second half of 8th c. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, fig. 354.

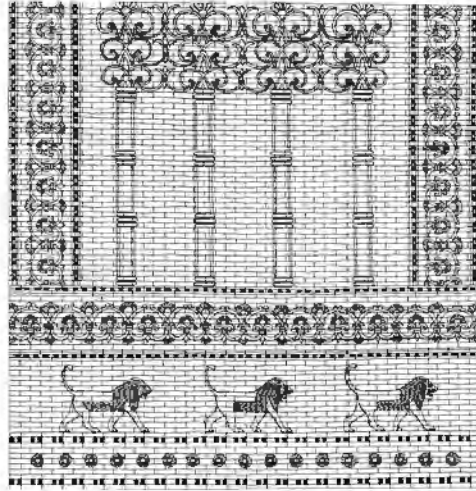


Fig. 4.308. Glazed-brick frieze (reconstruction); Babylon (Façade of throne room of Nebuchadnezzar II); 6th c. (ca. 604-562). Cf. Oates, *Babylon*, fig. 102.



Fig. 4.309. Enameled brick; Susa (Palace of Darius I); 6th-5th c. (ca. 521-486). Cf. Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, fig. 142 and p. 323.



Fig. 4.310. Orthostat; Alaja Hüyük; ca. 1450-1200. After Bittel, *Die Hethiter*, Abb. 228; cf. Macqueen, *Hittites*, figs. 131-132.

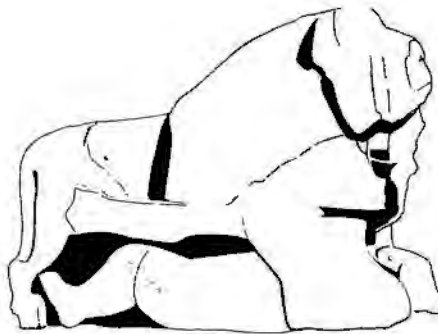


Fig. 4.311. Basalt statue (unfinished); Babylon (Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II), but origin debated; 6th c. (ca. 604-562), but date debated. After Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, fig. 102.

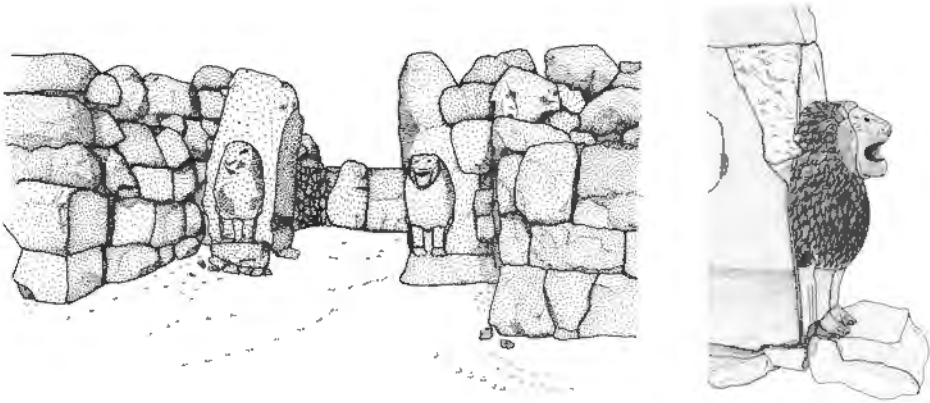


Fig. 4.312. Lion Gate; Hattusas/Bogazköy; LBA. Cf. Macqueen, *Hittites*, figs. 126-127.

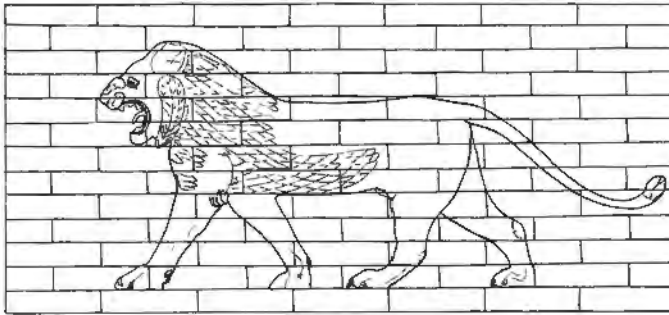


Fig. 4.313. Glazed brick relief; Babylon ("The Processional Way" leading to the Ishtar Gate); Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562). Cf. Oates, *Babylon*, fig. 104.



Fig. 4.314. Ahiram sarcophagus; Byblos; 13th c. After Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, figs. 317-318.

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Summary

The present study offers a comprehensive analysis of leonine imagery in the Hebrew Bible. After an introduction that discusses God-language and the theological significance of metaphor (Chapter 1), the biblical lion imagery is typed according to naturalistic or metaphorical use, along with various subdivisions (Chapter 2). When metaphorically employed, biblical lion imagery is found with four referents: the self/righteous, the enemy/wicked, the monarch/mighty one, and the deity. An analysis of the lion in the archaeological record of ancient Israel/Palestine from 1500-332 BCE is then offered (Chapter 3). In addition to finds from excavated sites, unprovenanced seals and related onomastica are discussed. The finds show: a) a common association of the lion with the monarch/mighty one and various deities; b) the presence of lion artifacts in cultic and official contexts; and c) evidence of artistic connections to other regions. Given the latter point, the study proceeds to investigate the use of the lion in the art and literature of the ancient Near East (Chapter 4). This vast corpus is organized according to rubric and function, categorizing the attested imagery as to whether it utilizes the lion as a negative image for the enemy or wicked; as a positive image for the monarch/mighty one or victor; or as an image for the gods and/or goddesses. The widespread use of the lion as a guardian of portals and gateways is also considered. In all three contexts (Hebrew Bible, archaeology of ancient Israel/Palestine, and ancient Near East), it is argued that the function of lion imagery as well as its main tenor in metaphorical presentations seem primarily dependent on the power and threat that this predatory animal represents.

Chapter 5 brings the comparative data of Chapter 4 into dialogue with the materials presented in Chapters 2-3 in order to cast further light on the different uses of the lion in the Hebrew Bible. Similarities and differences are noted and assessed. It is argued that: 1) the lion as trope of threat and power is relatively stable across the different data sets; 2) the use of the lion with monarch/mighty one is quite different (and muted) in the biblical text when compared to the comparative and archaeological materials; 3) the use of the lion with Yahweh is similar in many ways to the comparative and archaeological contexts; and 4) the use of the lion as an image for the enemy is also similar but somewhat more pronounced in the

Hebrew Bible (esp. in the Psalms). Possible explanations for #2 are offered, as is an investigation of Yahweh's leonine profile. That profile could stem from the storm-god composite Baal-Seth or, more probably, from the tradition of violent leonine goddesses (esp. Sekhmet and/or Ishtar). A third possible source for the imagery is the use of militant lion metaphors in ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions if, in fact, Israel's use is not *sui generis*.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by returning to the theological and metaphorical significance of zoomorphic imagery. Three appendices (lion terminology, semantic domain of lion imagery, biblical lion passages) and 483 images round out the volume.